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バカとテストと召喚獣3.5

井上堅二
Kenji Inoue

井上堅二
Kenji Inoue

今回はついに真打の登場です！
今だから言いますけど、実は僕……最初から秀吉一筋だったんですよ？　これで秀吉＆姉の表紙なんて描かれてしまったら、僕は、僕はもう……っ！　いえ、大丈夫です。このくらいの鼻血ならすぐ止まりますから。こうなると、次の表紙は誰にしたら良いのやら。困ったものです。

葉賀ユイ
Yui Haga

東京在住、純情硬派イラストレーター。旅行で行ってみたいのはアイスランドと鳴尾浜。長年辛党だと思っていたのが、最近同じぐらい甘い物が好きなことに気付く。コーヒー党だけど紅茶も大好き。日本酒党だけどビール大好き。この節操無しめッ！　次はどうしてほしいのかしらッ⁉
http://haga.neko.ne.jp/

カバーイラスト　葉賀ユイ

ファミ通文庫

井上堅二

ファミ通文庫

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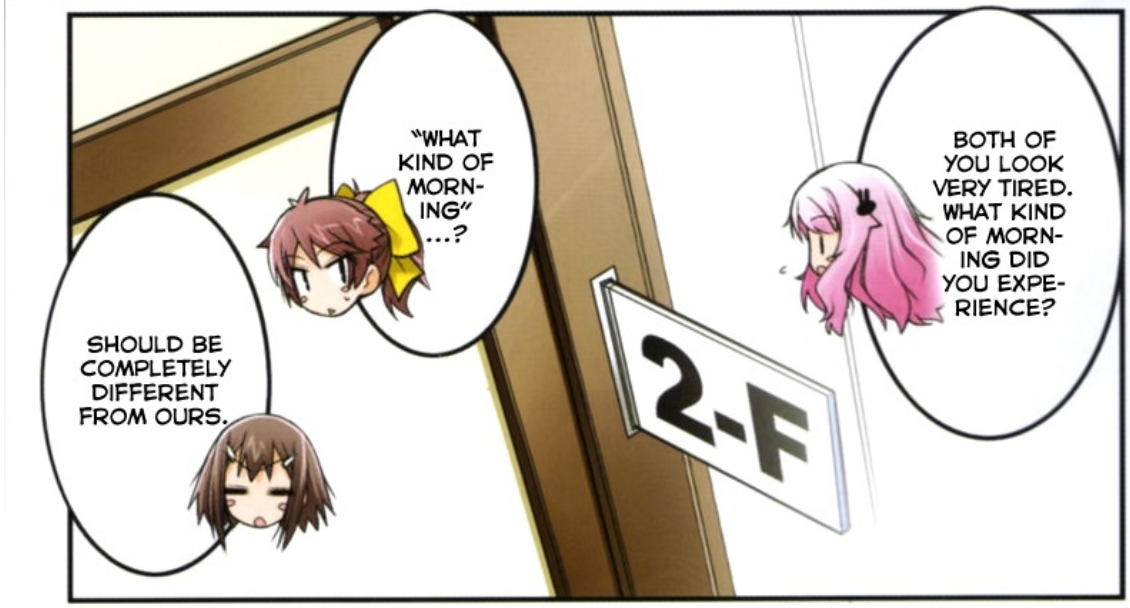
明久と葉月の出会いを描いたハートフルな『予習編』、恋文をもらった明久をサーチ&デス？『僕と暴徒とラブレター』、雄二が人生の墓場へ!?『俺と翔子と如月ハイランド』の3本に加え、ムッツリーニ暁に死す！『僕とプールと水着の楽園』&たまにはこんな休日を『僕とバイトと危険な週末』の書き下ろし2本を加えた、青春エクスプロージョンショートストーリー集！「おかしくない？　なんだか3人は死んじゃってるような気がするけど!?」（by 明久）

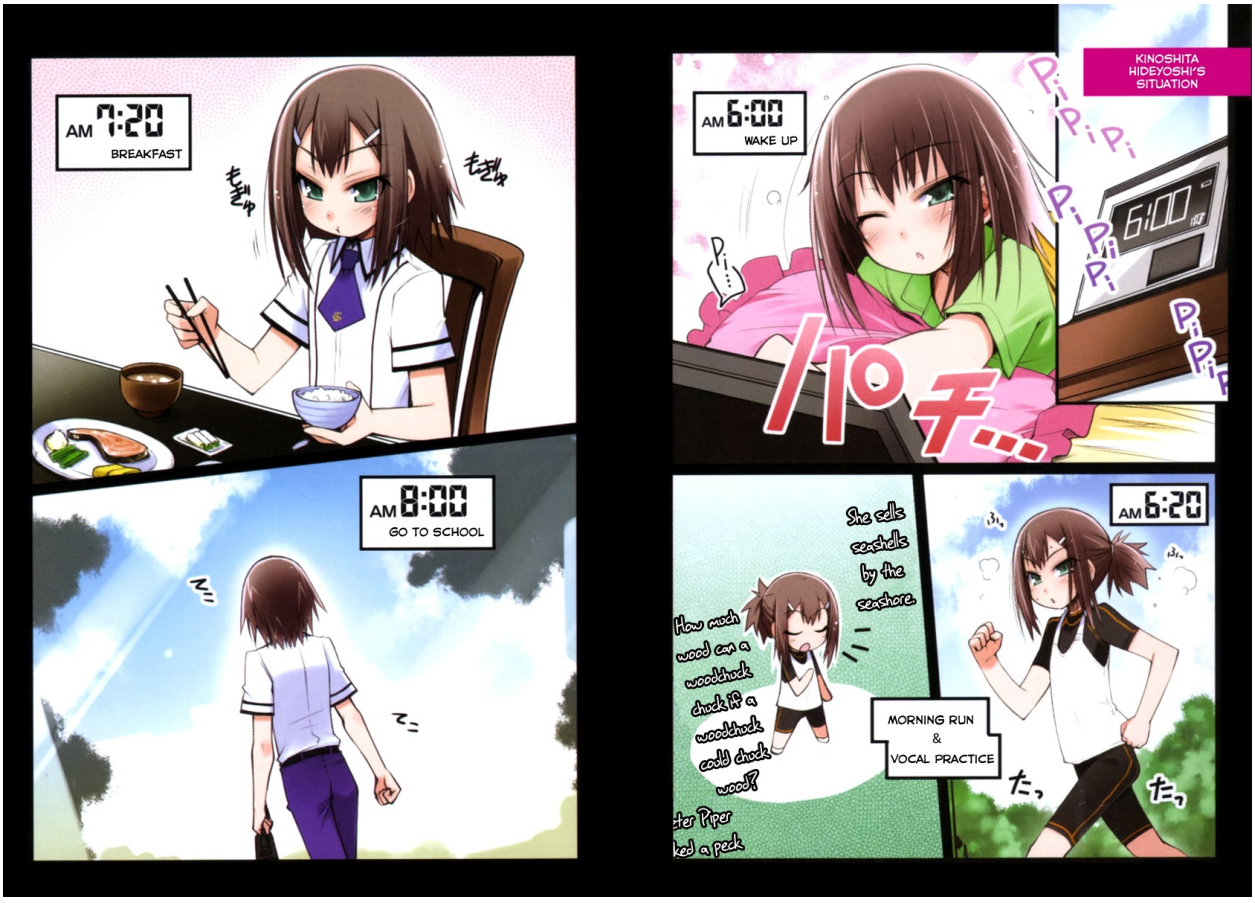
井上堅二の著作リスト

バカとテストと召喚獣
バカとテストと召喚獣2
バカとテストと召喚獣3
バカとテストと召喚獣3.5

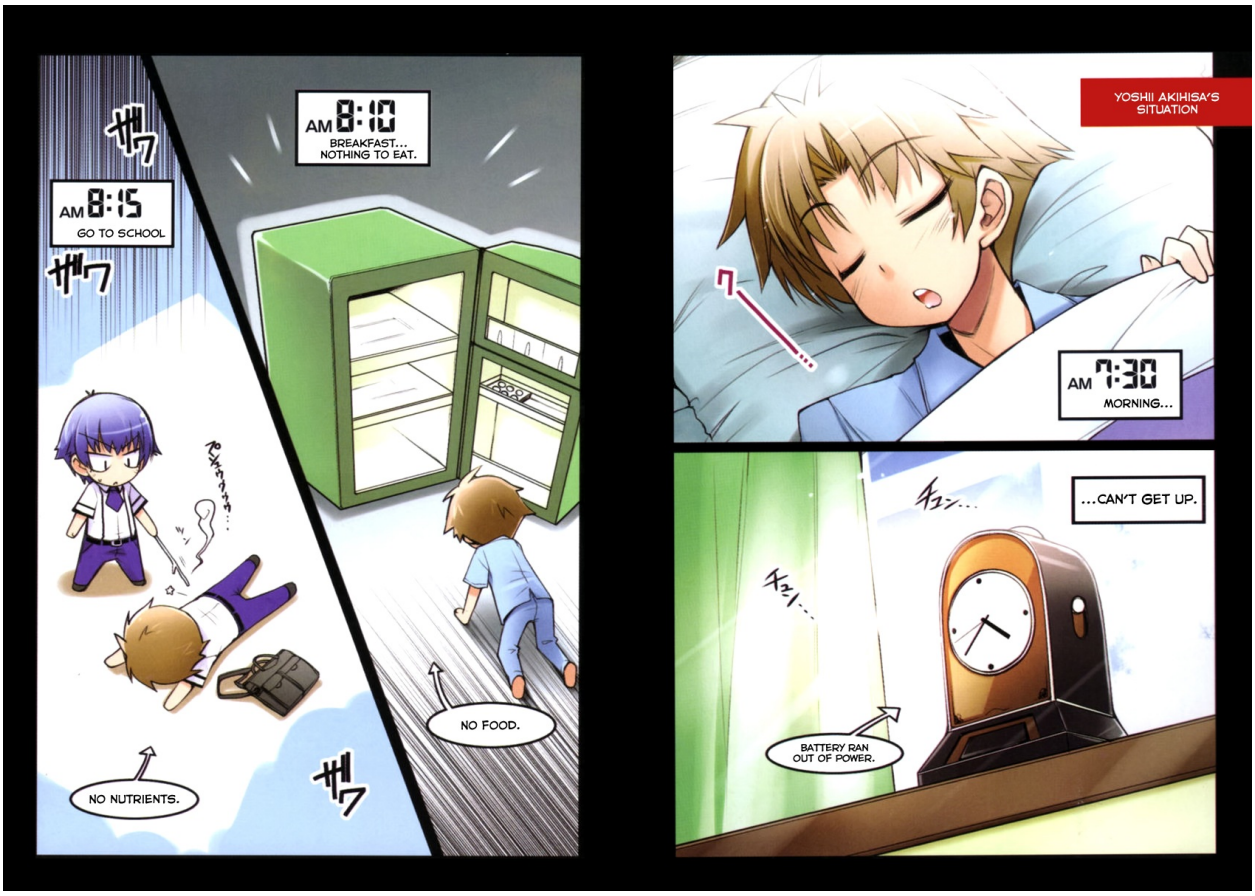
バカとテスト と召喚獣 3.5

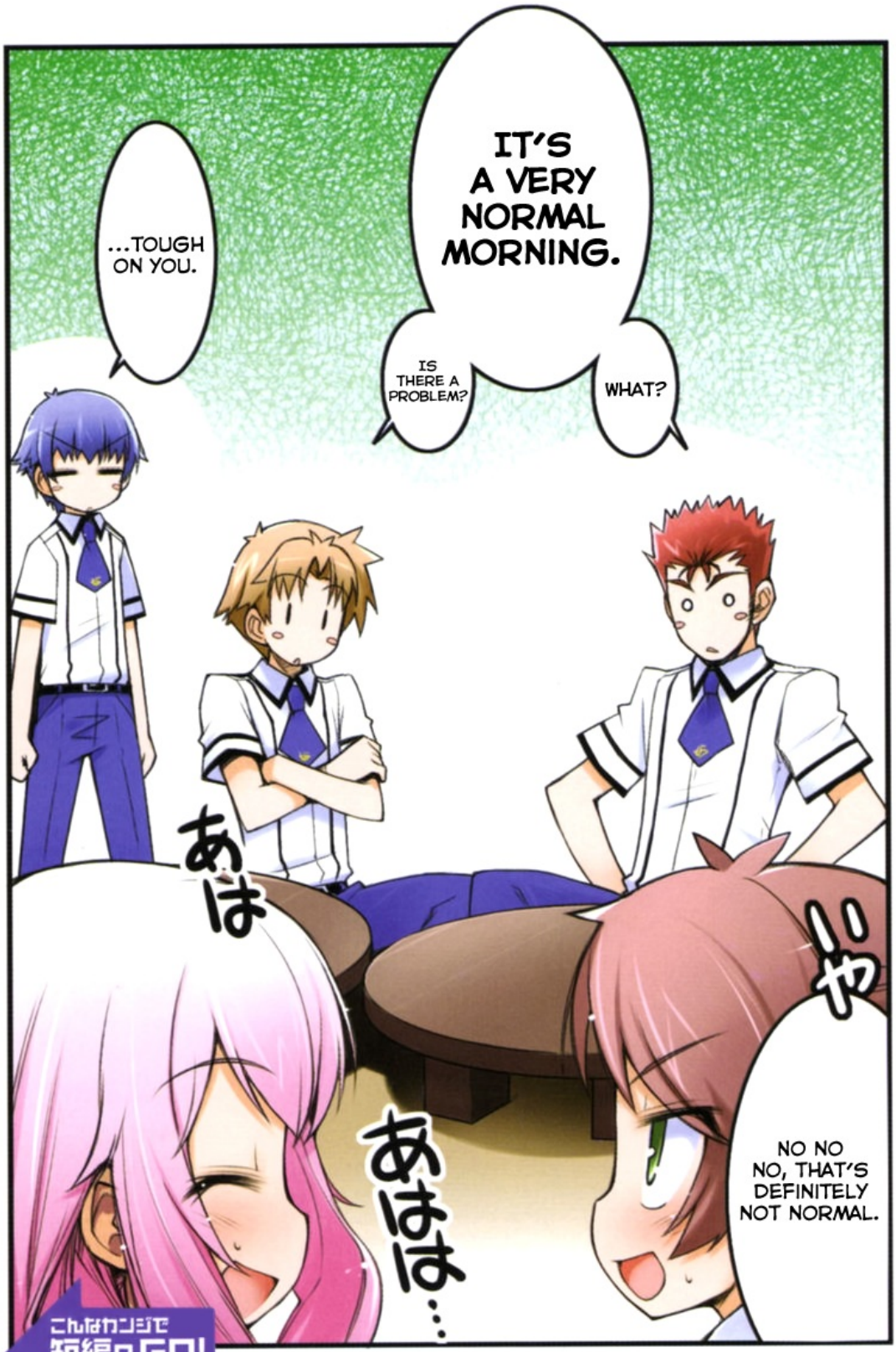
～Fクラスの日常の巻～




KINOSHITA HIDEYOSHI'S SITUATION
AM 6:00 WAKE UP
Pi Pi Pi Pi
Pi Pi Pi Pi
6:00
Pi Pi Pi
パチ...
AM 7:20 BREAKFAST
もぐもぐ
もぐもぐ
AM 8:00 GO TO SCHOOL
てこてこ
てこてこ
AM 6:20
MORNING RUN & VOCAL PRACTICE
たっ
たっ
She sells seashells by the seashore.
How much wood can a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
ter Piper
ked a peck

AM 7:20
BREAKFAST
To Yuuji:
Shouko will be handling today's breakfast.
Mom.
SO THAT'S WHY SHE INVADED MY HOUSE...
ゴギ ギ ギ ギ
THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE AT ALL!!!
...I WON'T FORGIVE YOU EVEN IF YOU SURRENDER.
AM 8:00
GO TO SCHOOL (SURRENDER)
SAKAMOTO YUUJI'S SITUATION
SO YOU CAME HERE TO ATTACK ME WHILE I WAS SLEEPING...!?
...YOU DIDN'T GO HOME WITH ME YESTERDAY.
AM 6:30
WAKE UP (TO AN AMBUSH)
I DON'T WANT TO BE KILLED BY YOU FOR THIS REASON!!
...YOU CAN'T ESCAPE.
AM 6:40
MORNING RUN & VOCAL PRACTICE


YOSHII AKIHISA'S SITUATION
AM 7:30
MORNING...
...CAN'T GET UP.
BATTERY RAN OUT OF POWER.
AM 8:10
BREAKFAST... NOTHING TO EAT.
NO FOOD.
AM 8:15
GO TO SCHOOL
NO NUTRIENTS.



こんなカンジで短編へGO!

ATOGAKI

こんにちは、葉賀です。
今回はサービス満点でしたね。
水着？いやいや**秀吉が。**

読者サービスという言葉が
ありますが、あれ欺瞞ですよね。
正しくは**作者サービス**です。

…少なくとも葉賀にとっては！

葉賀
2008.01

Idiots, Tests and the Summoned Beasts Preparation Chapter

Please fill in the name of the historical person in the blank below.

_____ instituted the Rakuichi Rakuza policy which abolished and prohibited monopolies to stimulate business and economy.

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

"Oda Nobunaga"

Teacher's comment:

Correct.

Shimada Minami's answer:

"That fella with the topknot"[1]

HADUKI SHIMADA

Teacher's comment:

Have you got yourself familiarized with Japan yet? I'm a little worried when I saw your answer.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

"Nobu"

Teacher's comment:

You're getting a little too familiar with him.

AKIHISA YOSHII

バカとテストと召喚獣
～予習編～

Sis seemed worn out after moving here.

Is someone bullying her in school? Or is someone irritating her?

Then again, her classmates sounded really interesting from the stories she told me, and she seemed to like them a lot...

So, what is wearing her out?

Is it because of her studies? She told me she had difficulties catching up.

I hope she can recover soon.

Her birthday's coming... Would she cheer up if I give her a huge doll? She loves stuffed dolls, after all.

Mm... I'll do that! I'll buy a *really* big stuffed doll to cheer her up!

I wonder if I have enough pocket money...

☆

"EVERYONE, FREEZE! PUT YOUR BAGS ON THE TABLE AND OPEN IT!"

No sooner has the homeroom period start than our homeroom teacher, Iron— I mean, Mr. Nishimura, declared this, without any prior warning.

Crap! The stuff I brought today has nothing to do with studies!

An idea popped up in my mind for that moment. *I'll grab my bag and run as fast as my legs could go!*

"Let me warn you: don't even think of running away."

It'll be one hell of a task to outrun this homeroom teacher. After all, he's sinewy,

promptly nicknamed as "Ironman". He'll just utilize those powerful muscles of his, trained from participating in numerous 'Ironman' triathlons, to relentlessly pursue those who dare to run away.

"Good, I'm going round to check. Any items I find unrelated to studies will be confiscated."

Starting from the first row near the corridor, he went round the rows to check the contents of the bags, confiscating trump cards, magazines, and the such.

"Sakamoto, show me the contents of your pocket."

One student has not only his bag, but his pockets as well checked.

"Damn it!"

Sakamoto Yuuji shouted in agony. By the way, he's my best friend, and also my worst friend.

Still, he rummaged through his pocket obediently and pulled out an MP3 player.

"Thought so. I'll be taking this."

Ironman put his MP3 player into his sack of confiscated items. Yuuji, who never expected his pocket to be searched, glared at Ironman defiantly.

"Quite a disaster for you, eh?"

I whispered to him.

"Damn it! He doesn't usually check our pockets, does he?! Why am I the only *one having this special treatment?!)*

"Too bad. Who asked you to be such a badass?"

"Damn it!"

On a closer look, how thorough Ironman checks depends on who the person is. He'll just glance through the bags of good students, but for others, he'll check them thoroughly, including the hidden pockets.

"You're next, Yoshii Akihisa."

"Ah, yes."

Ironman stood in front of me. I'm sure he wouldn't ask me to go through my pockets like Yuuji—

"Take off your uniform and change into your gym clothes."

"Eh?! You're kidding, right?!"

I can't believe how low his trust was in me.

"Besides... You know, it's a little embarrassing to change in front of the girls..."

"That won't do. You might have prohibited goods hidden up your pants, so change your clothes right now."

"What?! Even I wouldn't stoop that low! You should at least trust me—"

As I stepped forward to bring my point across, something dropped out from the leg of my pants with a loud thud.

"Oi, Akihisa, your dropped your DS."

I thanked Yuuji, who kindly picked up my handheld console, and faced the Ironman once again.

"As I was saying, trust me, will ya?"

"Don't bother changing. You can't be trusted even in your gym clothes."

Wha- What the hell? He tightened up his guard instead!

"You actually brought game consoles, manga, light novels, DVDs to school... What on Earth are you treating school as?!"

My precious treasures went into his sack, one by one. Just my luck for him to do a spot check on the day I brought them. The combined value of those items might go up to thousands of yen.

"Is this everything? Let me repeat this again: the school is a place for you to learn. Next time, don't bring anything that is not related to your studies."

Ironman returned to the podium with the sack of confiscated items. Farewell, my precious treasures...

"All right, since the spot check took quite a bit of time, there will be no homeroom session for today. The first lesson will be the Summoning Practicals, so get to the gym as soon as possible."

Marking the end of his class with that, Ironman left the classroom, with everyone's treasures in his sack.

☆

"Summon!"

With calls of summoning echoing throughout the gym, I turned to Yuuji, who was sitting beside me.

"It's just an hour into school and we're already got hit by a nuke."

"No shit. Man, I can't believe my one-month-old MP3 got confiscated!"

"Whoa, that's quite some fresh meat."

"And it was bloody expensive!"

A vexed look warped the wild features on his face. I understand his feelings *very* well.

"Akihisa, your games got done for as well, right? Quite a lot of them, too."

"Mm... The total value could easily hit thirty thousand yen."

A console, games, DVDs and CDs... Looking from the value of the confiscated

items, the one with the highest loss would either be me or Muttsulini. How unlucky...

"Next, Himeji Mizuki, please step forward."

"Y-Yes."

"Hey, it's Himeji's turn! Muttsulini, aren't you gonna take that rare photo of her in gym clothes?"

"...My camera was confiscated."

"Oh, right... A pity indeed. It's pretty hard to see her in gym clothes when we're in different classes."

"And this is the only Summoning Practicals we'll ever get."

"..."

Depressed, Muttsulini's head sunk even lower. Oh well, can't blame him for that.

With that silky long hair, and that cute, innocent look, coupled with those bouncy chests of hers which seemed to have a mind of its own, it's easy to figure out why any guy would want to take a photo of her. I, for one, would die to take a photo of her at this moment.

"I-Is this how you do it? Summon!"

She mumbled that out diffidently. A geometrical magic array formed near her feet, and her summoned beast appeared in front of everyone.

"Just like I thought, her summoned beast sure looks pretty strong."

"Totally. Wouldn't have guessed that from its cuteness."

Himeji's summoned beast looked really cute. Since a summoned beast takes the appearance of its caster, there's no need to explain further when the caster's such a babe as well.

Speaking of which, what made her summoned beast so impressive was—

"I'm sure her beast's the only one capable of wielding such a huge sword."

"Yeah, probably only those at her level could pull that off."

Her summoned beast was wielding a Western longsword several times longer than her height effortlessly. Anyone could tell that this summoned beast isn't one to be underestimated.

Class C, Himeji Mizuki, Combined Subjects 3943 points

vs

Class C, Furukawa Ayumi, Combined Subjects 1264 points

The points were displayed in front of them. These were probably the results from the previous mid-term exams.

"No wonder it's so strong."

"Gosh, it's almost 4000 points. She sure is smart."

Holed up in a corner, we nod in agreement to each other.

The strength of a summoned beast is directly proportional to the exam results of the student. So basically, in a Summoning Exam, the higher your exam scores are, the stronger your summoned beast will be.

"Oh yeah, Akihisa, don't you know her?"

"Mm. She was my classmate in grade school, but we haven't spoke to each other for years. She'd probably have forgotten about me, I guess."

Since we're in different classes now, I've became distant with her. I'd definitely talk to her if I have the chance, but the probability of that happening is close to nil. It would most likely look like a confession if I were to barge into her class and say to her "I've got something to tell you".

"I supposed... Since the chances of you getting to be in the same class with her next year is close to zero, you'd eventually disappear from her memory."

"Next year? You mean the streaming exams?"

"Duh. You'll definitely won't be in the same class as her."

"That might be true, but..."

Just like any other school in Japan, we were streamed into different classes upon entering the academy. However, it will be different from the next year onwards. We'll be sorted according to our grades. Though Himeji is in Class C, with those grades of hers, she'll definitely be sorted into Class A next year. That's why Yuuji and I will probably be in different classes with her again since we're both straddling about in Class D.

"Will she really forget about me? It feels kinda lonely when I think of that."

"She will, since there's no point remembering a loser like you."

"What did you say?!"

We continued chatting while looking at the practicals of others when a voice called out:

"Next! Yoshii Akihisa and Shimada Minami!"

Ironman- I mean, Mr. Nishimura's voice rang loudly through the gym. Looking around, I realized that the others had finished their practicals.

"I'll be right back."

"Sure. You're a candidate for the "Punishment Inspector" anyway, so use the chance to learn how to control your summoned beast."

"Hey! I'm not a badass like you, Yuuji!"

I rolled my eyes back at Yuuji. Really, me as candidate for *the* Punishment Inspector? How rude. Having that title is the same as being labeled as the most problematic student in school. How could I possibly be a candidate when no one

in the history of the academy had that title before?

"Hurry up, Yoshii!!"

"Coming!"

Hearing Ironman's roar at me, I hastily increased my pace. My training partner had already finished the summoning process.

"..."

My training partner was staring blankly at the summoned beast in front of her. This energetic girl, with a ponytail and a pair of sexy, slim legs, is my classmate, Shimada. However, a worried expression was registered on her face now. What's wrong? Was she disappointed by how weak her summoned beast looked?

"What's wrong, Shimada? Were you shocked by your unexpectedly weak summoned beast?"

I attempted to console her with my kind words. For a moment, the grey clouds over her head seemed to have disappeared, and she beamed a smile at me.

"Ah, so you're my opponent. I'm so happy!"

She blushed slightly. Seeing her blushing made me happy as well. Geez, I didn't think she'd do that in front of everyone... I don't know how to handle her.

"It feels good to be able to beat you up!"

...Seriously, someone teach me how to handle this crazy girl.

"Shimada, our beasts are going to do the battling, not us."

I'm a little worried, so I confirmed the rules with her again. This summoning practical was meant for the summoning battles next year, so it should be a battle between summoned beasts. At least, that's what I thought.

"You're right. It ain't gonna be a fight between us."

She nodded her head in agreement. Great, seems like she got my point.

"Since I'll be the only one dishing out the beating anyway."

THAT'S NOT THE POINT!

"Did you hear that, sir? She's threatening me! If you have the time to check our belongings, shouldn't you do something about this explicit display of violence in school?!"

"Shimada, violence is bad, even if it's Yoshii we're talking here."

"But, sir..."

"No buts. A no is a no, you understand?"

"...Fine."

"I'm glad you understood. So-"

A wide smile appeared on Ironman's face,

"—I'll make this an exception."

"Wait... That's weird..."

Am I thinking too much? That conversation sounded as if a teacher had just allowed a case of violence in school.

"I'll do my best!"

"Good luck!"

"Ahaha, both of you are really dumb. Do you think I'll go down that easily and forgive you guys? I'll have you satisfy my demands before I-I'M SORRY! IT'S MY FAULT, PLEASE SPARE ME!!"

They didn't spare me, even after my numerous begging.

Was it something I said that lead to this disaster...?

☆

"Man... Ever since the morning inspection, it's been one disaster after another today..."

School finally ended. I was bitching about the day with the guys I usually hang out with.

"That's because you brought so many unnecessary things to school."

Sitting beside me and showing me a smile is Kinoshita Hideyoshi, who's in the same class as me, Yuuji and Muttsulini. It's already weird to hear him speak like an old man, and he has a beauty's face on him. He really likes to make comments. Even so, I do feel that he's the most normal person after me, since the other two are so abnormal that words can't describe them.

"Speaking of which, Hideyoshi didn't get anything confiscated, right?

"Of course I did, I got some costumes and props confiscated from me. Even though I told sensei that it's for the drama club, they still got confiscated either way."

The school has already provided some props and costumes for Hideyoshi, so Hideyoshi himself doesn't need to bring them. If so, these are unnecessary things. However—

"There's no need to confiscate them all anyway, he could have given us some leeway. Who expected Ironman's brain to be so hard."

"...(Nods head forcefully)."

"His brain's definitely filled with lead."

Muttsulini and Yuuji seem to agree with me. This can't be helped, since they got quite a few things confiscated as well.

And I actually thought that 'we're just having summoning practical today, so

there're no lessons; should be rather relaxing today'.

It was supposed to be relaxing, but I guess it's better to have lessons without the search.

"Summoning practical..."

Hearing my little grumbling, Yuuji muttered to himself.

"Eh? What's wrong, Yuuji?"

"Nothing. It's just that I remembered that we have to take part in summoning war next year."

For some reason, he sure seemed happy when he said this.

Speaking of summoning war, well, it's about having a summoning battle between classes with the class facilities on the line. If we can move onto second year without any mishaps, we'll have this summoning war system on us.

"But why must we have this summoning war system? If we want to differentiate the scores clearly, can't we just stick grades onto everyone?"

"Well, most likely, they prefer a summoning war to tests since it can motivate students, right? As a class, the students will work hard to not drag their classmates down."

"I see. So they intend to make us work together and improve our grades without breaking us, right?"

"Yeah, this allows the school to do what they want the most, and that's 'to groom students who can showcase their real potential in society'."

"Oh~ Is that so?"

Just as the four of them were chatting away.

"Ah...really, that Yoshii actually left the cleaning work to me. Where did he go off to?"

A certain student can be heard shouting on the corridor. Is that Shimada-san?

"What the heck, Akihisa. You're in charge of cleaning today?"

"Mm, but I left the cleaning work to Shimada-san and ran off first."

"Hmm, according to how I see it, you two have quite the relationship."

"...(Nods head forcefully)."

"Ah haha, it's not what you think it is."

"Really. Once I catch him, I'll tie his limbs up and throw him down the 3rd level!"

That's a highly difficult stunt even a stuntman will be afraid of.

"Sorry, I don't think I can protect my own life any longer. I'll be leaving now!"

Without saying anything else, I grabbed my bag and dashed out of the corridor. I love my life.

"Ah, Yoshii! So you're hiding here! Hold it right there!"

"I'm not going to wait! You're going to kill me, right?"

"I'm not angry at all. Just hold on, will you!?"

That's definitely a lie.

"These two really have rather good feelings."

"...(Nods head forcefully)."

She said that she's not angry, but she's holding onto a rope for some reason.

☆

"Hoo...that was scary~"

It's been past 30 minutes since I came running out of school, and before I knew it, I'm on a shopping street.

"Well. I don't intend to buy anything, so I guess I'll go back home—hm?"

Just as I intended to head home, I saw a familiar figure walk into a shop. Isn't that Himeji-san?

"I guess it's somewhat of a fate for us to meet here. Should I be courageous and call her..."

Though we did study in the same class during elementary school, we were separated into different classes during middle school. Before I knew it, Himeji-san seemed so distant from me. To see her in front of me after so many years, I really want to talk to her—the reason why I feel this way is most likely because of Yuuji's words 'She'll erase you from her memory anyway'.

In order to turn my thoughts into action, I follow Himeji-san closely as I walked into the shop...only to find that there're so many dolls here, it's unbelievable. Seems like this is a doll shop that a girl will love the most—what the heck, this shop's basically a doll shop!

"Well, let's go back. This shop really doesn't suit me."

I immediately hasten my pace and walk towards the exit. Anyway, the most important thing right now is to leave this place.

"This is Hazuki's only request of this lifetime. Please, uncle!"

"Even if you say that, I have to do business, you know..."

The moment I reached the exit, I suddenly heard this conversation. It seemed

like a girl's standing at the counter and telling the cashier something. She seems rather insistent on this. What's going on?

I felt a bit mindful, so I turn my head to where the voice came from. As I expected, it's a cashier uncle and a girl who looks like she's in elementary school.

"I want to get that big Noi doll no matter what. Please, I beg you!"

"Even if you ask me like this...we're doing business. Wouldn't it be unfair to the other customers if I give you a little discount? We shopkeepers do have to treat all customers equally."

"Even so, please!"

"Uuu...really can't handle you..."

The cashier uncle looked rather troubled as he said this and scratches his face. The girl however continued to beg earnestly. Seeing such a small girl beg like this, I'll be seen as really cruel if I'm to walk away like this...

"Hey, little girl, why do you want this doll?"

I know that I'm too nosey, but I still ended up getting involved.

Now that a 3rd party has suddenly appeared, the little girl and the uncle revealed a surprised look on their faces.

"Be, because onee-chan didn't look too good recently. I wanted to buy the doll that she always wanted to hopefully motivate her..."

"Not looking good?"

"Most likely, because she just came back from Germany and couldn't understand Japanese well!"

Shifted houses...even if it's within Japanese land, anyone will feel lonely when the friends and environment changes, let alone coming back to Japan.

"Even then, onee-chan took over mommy and daddy and did all the housework like sweeping and washing clothes nicely, and often play together with Hazuki..."

Seemed like it hit her sore spot as Hazuki-chan's wide eyes start to tear up.

"Waa! Don, don't cry! Nii-san will help you out here!"

"...Really?"

"Mm, really."

"...Thank you, onii-chan!"

Wiping away the tears, Hazuki-chan reveals a delightful smile.

"Speaking of which, how much does this doll cost?"

The doll in Hazuki-chan's arms is about 1m tall. If I make a rough estimate, I don't think 5,000 yen's going to be enough.

"Including tax, it'll be a total of 24,800 yen."

"Sorry, nii-san already tried, but he can't do it."

"Onii-chan?"

Hazuki-chan looks rather sad.

Argh! Didn't expect one to be that expensive. Under these conditions, the declaration of surrender came out of my mouth without thinking through.

"Then how much does Hazuki-chan have?"

"I only have 10,000 yen..."

So we're missing 15,000. Including my entire fortune, there's only 11,699 yen. We can't even hit the price of 24,800 yen! The most we can pay is half.

"Excuse me, can you sell this doll to us at 11,699 yen?"

"Eh, I just said before that that we're doing a business here..."

The reply's still the same.

"Onii-chan, this isn't any different from before."

Hazuki-chan whispered to my ear.

She's right. Up till now, I've been doing the same thing as what Hazuki-chan's been doing. However, things will be different from now on. I'm not an elementary school student; let's show her how an adult (high school student) does things!

"We have only 11,699 yen in total, that's about half the price of the doll, right?"

"Ya. That's still not quite enough."

"Hazuki-chan wants this doll, and uncle wants to sell this to her, but you're unwilling to sell it to her at half price. If so, I have a great idea!"

"Hm? What is it?"

"We can rip the doll in half and sell the right side to—eh? What? Why are you two seeing me as an idiot?"

"...Are you really a high school student?"

"...Onii-chan's an idiot!"

I, I actually got called stupid by an elementary school kid!

"I can't give you a discount, but I can guarantee that I won't sell this doll away for the time being. You can go back to discuss with your parents first."

Making this conclusion, the uncle ended the conversation just like this.

"Can't you ask your parents to buy it for you, Hazuki-chan?"

Having walked out of the shop, we came to the park to discuss our plans.

"Mommy and daddy aren't normally at home...so they would leave the money to onee-chan. If I want to buy something, onee-chan will definitely ask for a reason..."

"I see, uu~"

Wanting to do something for her beloved older sister—Hazuki-chan's heart's ever so glamorous, it's way different from my family who sent me to Fumitzuki Gakuen on the excuse of 'not wanting to waste school fees'. I must help Hazuki-chan in order to prevent her from losing this intimacy with her family.

But speaking of which, what should I do? It'll be good if I have some more money, but my money's about to be used up...

"Oh ya! Hazuki can get money if she sells her manga to a second-hand shop, right?"

Hazuki-chan thought of this brilliant plan as her eyes sparkle. It's true that we can get money just like this, but I think that she can't get so much anyway. Of course, it's a different case altogether if I have those handheld games that were confiscated this morning—

"Hm? Oh ya, there's this plan after all!"

"...Onii-chan, have you thought of something?"

"I can't possibly get it back in my hands anyway. If I'm successful, we may be able to get enough money to buy the doll..."

Though I don't think it can work...mm! It's still worth a try though.

"Okay! Hazuki-chan, can you come back to the park tomorrow?"

"Y, yes. I can come over..."

"Then we'll meet here tomorrow. It's getting dark now, let's go home."

I waved my hands and said goodbye to Hazuki-chan. Anyway, I got to discuss it with Yuuji and the rest tomorrow.

"Ah, mm, bye bye..."

Speaking of which, did Himeji-san really enter that shop?

☆

"So you want to take back those confiscated items?"

The next morning, in the same classroom, I talked to the trio as per usual.

"I do feel that it's a pity to leave those things that got confiscated yesterday, but..."

"Uu~mm...ya, but the opponent's that Ironman. We may be designated as 'Punishment Inspectors' if we're not careful..."

Yuuji and Hideyoshi lower their chin and ponder. Seems like they don't intend to help me. This is bad, looks like I have to deal with this on my own.

"...I approve of Akihisa's proposal."

"Eh? Muttsulini? You're willing to help me?"

"...(Nods head forcefully)."

Great! Now at least I have someone who specializes in stealth helping me out.

"...Never mind, let's give it a go."

"Ah? So Yuuji's okay with it?"

"Yeah. I just bought that MP3 recently, and I accumulated quite a debt to Ironman, so let's settle this once and for all."

Yuuji smirked. What an enthusiastic bad guy's face.

"If so, I'll help out as well. If I can get back those things, I don't want to give up

as well."

In the end, even Hideyoshi nodded his head, and everyone decided to take part in this. As expected of the group of problematic first-years.

"Right now, the most important thing is to investigate where our targets are."

"That's right. If we don't even know where Ironman hid those confiscated items, we can't possibly get them back even if we want to."

The confiscated items may have ended up being abandoned, but they were just confiscated yesterday, so Ironman should still have them with him.

"That's the case. Akihisa, remove the silence function of the phone."

"Eh? Why?"

"Don't ask too much, just do it. You want those confiscated items back, right?"

"...I'm not really sure what's going on, but I just need to remove the silence function, right?"

"That's right."

The phone can't possibly ring during lesson time, there shouldn't be any problems, right? Let's just follow what Yuuji told me to do.

I pull my handphone out from my pocket and took it out of silent mode.

"Oi, you people better hurry up and sit down. I'm going to start taking attendance."

Seeing our homeroom teacher Ironman walk into the classroom, I immediately slip the handphone back into my pocket.

"Alright, let's begin."

Thus, our battle for the confiscated items officially begins now.

"Shimada."

"Here."

"Shimizu."

"Here."

At the usual time of taking attendance, Ironman's coarse voice echoes clearly throughout the classroom.

"Yamaguchi."

"Here."

"Watanabe."

"Here."

—Beep beep beep.

Suddenly, a beep interrupted the class while attendance is taken. Whose phone is it? Really, do think that we have such a stupid person in class. The phone will definitely get confiscated when it rings in class.

"...Yoshii, hand over your phone."

"...Yes."

The problem is, this stupid person was me.

Damn it! Why must it ring at this moment!? Who called me!?

<<Missed call: Sakamoto Yuuji>>

"Yu, Yuuji, you betrayed me!"

"I'll consficate the handphone then."

"Ahh! Handphone! MY HANDPHONE!"

My handphone got taken away by Ironman mercilessly.

"Very good. Nobody's came late nor skipped classes. I hope that all students will continue to keep this up."

After taking the attendance, Ironman moves his heavy feet out of the classroom —together with my handphone.

"Very good. Part 1 of the plan is complete."

"Yuuji! What sort of grudge do you have against me! Now my handphone got confiscated by Ironman all because of you!"

"This is a bait meant to fish out where our targets are. We just need to take them back."

"Eh? Bait?"

"That's right. I deliberately allowed Ironman to confiscate your handphone in order to find out where Ironman hid those items."

"Why didn't you tell me in the first place..."

And if possible, I hope that you can use your handphone as bait.

"...I'm back."

"WAHH!"

Suddenly talking right behind me. You scared me~

"Oh, Muttsulini came back already. How was it?"

"...Those confiscated items are placed in the staff storage cupboard."

"As expected of Muttsulini, erasing your own presence to tail people, that truly is your specialty. I'm impressed."

Seems like Muttsulini went to tail Ironman and investigate where my handphone was hidden. If it's tailing others without attracting attention, Yuuji can't do it, and Hideyoshi doesn't have the skills.

"...But the cupboard's locked."

"Okay. So where's the key?"

"...In the rear left pocket of Ironman's pants."

"I see. If so, we have to snatch the key from him."

"Ya, but how are we going to do that?"

"No problems. I got a good idea. We'll take action during cleaning time."

Anyway, let's attend lessons and wait for school dismissal.

☆

It's finally dismissal time.

"So, what plan do you have?"

As I tried to sneak out yesterday, I was punished to sweep the entire corridor alone. Thus, I'm discussing the plan with Yuuji and the rest while twisting the mop around. These damned guys don't have any intentions of helping out in the first place.

"We'll be using that."

Yuuji lifts his chin and points.

"A pail? What are we going to do with that?"

"We're going to use that to splash water on Ironman and make him take off his clothes."

I see. If so, we can then take his clothes away and take the key to the cupboard,

"Mm hm~ this method is simple and easy to succeed."

Hideyoshi's right. We can't possibly fail. Basically, there's only the last problem to this plan, and that is—whoever going to splash the water on Ironman will get pursued by him to the ends of the Earth.

"There's only one problem in this plan, and that's the one who's going to splash the water, 'Akihisa' will get pursued by him to the ends of the Earth."

Hold on! Is it decided that I'll be the one in charge of doing this?

"However, that's not really a huge problem."

THAT'S A HUGE PROBLEM TO ME!

"Oi, isn't that too strange? Let's settle this with rock paper scissors!"

"Ooh, look! Me and our target's already here."

"Very good. You got to do your best, Akihisa!"

"...Do your best."

"Eh? Hold on!"

The trio already wordlessly retreated back in the shortest time possible.

Ironman has already climbed up the stairs. If so, I can only do this!

My eyes have already captured the target, and the relative speed was estimated. The prepared weapon's in my hand, everything's okay—time to attack!

"WAAHH! I SLIPPED!"

Dragging the mop, I deliberately fell forward by letting my feet stagger and aim the pail at Ironman, who's on the stairs. GET WET!

"GUAH!"

How, how is it possible! As expected of Ironman! To be able to suddenly react in the blink of an eye and dodge the splash thanks to his superhuman senses! However—

"WHERE ARE YOU ESCAPING TO!?"

I drag the mop in my hand to where Ironman dodged to. I won't admit defeat so easily!

Phoosh, Clak cak cak.

The water from the pail drenched Ironman, and the pail rolled aside. Mission accomplished.

I pick up the pail and mop that I threw out as I remain mindful not to step on the puddle of water, saying to a stunned Ironman "Sorry, I slipped—AHH, sensei! An encyclopaedia isn't to be used as a weapon!"

"I thought I just heard you say 'Where are you escaping to', didn't I?"

"That's just a hallucination."

"Stop trying to lie to me with such a serious look on your face. Get ready to die!"

"Sen, sensei, please don't use the edge of the encyclopaedia!"

Where are you guys now! Come save me! I'll definitely be beaten down by Ironman into a panda if this keeps up!

"Ahh, Akihisa, you really ended up doing it."

Yuuji and the rest appeared out of nowhere. Anyway, I'm saved~

"I told you so many times 'not to splash water onto sensei'..."

"Ow, OWW! SENSEI! I SAID THAT I DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE ALREADY!"

They, they didn't help out at all! These damned guys! Are they intending to sit around and watch?

"Sensei, punish Akihisa later. I guess you better change your clothes. If you don't mind, I'll lend my P.E. attire to you."

"That's right. Sorry, then lend me that. Yoshii, stay behind and scrub the floor

clean!"

Leaving these words behind, Ironman, who was drenched by me, head off to the classroom with Yuuji and the rest to change clothes.

"...So unfortunate."

Anyway, I remained behind to clean the floor up. Besides, I have the cleaning tools in my hand.

Just as I'm working hard to wipe the water off the floor, Hideyoshi walks out of the classroom and moves towards me.

"I got the key, Akihisa."

"Really? Then we just need to enter the staffroom and get back the confiscated items."

"Umm, let's hurry up before Ironman realizes it."

"Got it!"

After letting the mop lean against the wall, Hideyoshi and I quickly head towards the staffroom.

"I'm going in then."

I took the cupboard key from Hideyoshi's hands and reach my hand out for the door.

"There's no problem, right?"

"No need to worry. I'll try my best to walk into the staffroom without raising too much attention and get those things back."

I should be just an ordinary student to every teacher, except for Ironman. I should be more suited for this role as compared to Hideyoshi, who has the look of a beauty.

"Really? Then I'll just wait here for your good news."

"Mm, I'm going in then~ 'cuse me~"

I open the staffroom door slightly. No problem, I'm not some irritating guy.

"Yoshii? Hurry up and get over here!"

"Why!? Why am I noticed so soon after entering the room!?"

I got caught by the Ancient Literature teacher immediately after entering the room. Why?

"I want to hear what excuse you have regarding the essay 'translate the Tsurezuregusa[2] into Modern Language'!"

"Ah, I did hand in my homework properly."

"I'm asking why did you turn the Tsurezuregusa into a rap!?"

"Eh? But sensei wanted it to be translated into the modern language, and speaking of modern Japanese, isn't it—"

"Ah, Yoshii-kun, remember to come over here after you're done there."

"Yoshii, that Chemistry report you handed in was too ridiculous! Come over and explain it to me later."

Unknowingly, I got surrounded by several teachers. Well, if this is the case, forget about completing the plan, I'll be hounded by these teachers till night! Got to find a way to get away from them!

"Excuse me..."

Just as I'm pondering on what to do, someone else entered the staffroom. Hm? Isn't that Hideyoshi?

"Ooh, isn't that Kinoshita? What's wrong?"

"I, I suddenly...don't feel too good...but the health teacher isn't...in..."

Hideyoshi cupped his mouth. He really doesn't look too good. Is he sick?

"Hideyoshi, are you—"

I frantically rushed towards him. At this moment, he suddenly blinked at me. I see, so he's acting! As expected of someone from the drama club, I nearly got fooled.

"Sorry, but can I rest here—"

Before finishing, Hideyoshi collapsed onto the floor.

"Ki, Kinoshita! Are you alright?"

"Anyway, let's take him to the sickbay!"

"You, you're right! Sensei, please carry his legs!"

A few teachers start to create quite the ruckus. After that, everyone in the staffroom left to accompany Hideyoshi to the sick bay. Brilliantly done, Hideyoshi!

"Let's use this opportunity to get back those confiscated items. Let me see, Ironman...no wait, it's Nishimura. Nishimura's..."

I checked the nametag on the cupboards which are according to order. Oh, found it. It's this one.

"...Speaking of which, I somehow imagined that bugs will crawl out of Ironman's cupboard."

Though I'm a bit fearful, I have no time to hesitate. I pull out the key Hideyoshi handed to me and pull the door handle down, opening the metal cupboard effortlessly.

"Oh, it's unexpectedly clean..."

The cupboard's arranged rather neatly, and the bag of confiscated goods are placed in an obvious place.

"Let's get out of here before someone notices—hm?"

Just as I was about to lock the cupboard up and run away, I noticed a pile of old

books tied up in raffia strings. Should be meant for throwing away.

"Uu~hm...since he's going to throw it, I might as well take it. Maybe I can get some money as well."

After grabbing the books with both hands, I immediately dashed out of the staffroom.

"Okay! At least we achieved our goal!"

After what happened just now, I brought the spoils—the bag of confiscated items back to Yuuji, only taking away my own stuff and the pile of old books. I then took them over to a second-hand shop to exchange these spoils for cash.

My handheld games and gaming software garnered a price lower than what I expected, while that pile of books got quite the price; what a nice mistake in estimation. I really got to thank Ironman for this.

"Let me see, is that girl here~"

"Ah! Onii-chan! You're here!"

Hazuki-chan immediately came running over to me the moment I approached the park. She really looked like a cute puppy, and that even warms my heart. Maybe it's because I'm often surrounded by idiots, Ironman and a violent girl...

"Mm, because we arranged to meet each other. Oh yeah, where did you get that doll from?"

Looking closely, Hazuki-chan's hugging something similar to the Noi doll that she wanted to buy (is that what it's called?). It looks as if it was sewn by hand.

"There was a pretty onee-chan who came over and said to me 'If that onii-chan couldn't succeed, then give this to your sister!' and handed it over to me!"

"?"

"And she also said 'If that onii-chan managed to buy the doll, I'll give this doll to you.'"

The kid's lack of order in her speech confused me.

Erm, let me straighten Hazuki-chan's words out—

—A pretty onee-chan came to Hazuki-chan today.

—And then, she handed this handmade doll over to Hazuki-chan

—This pretty onee-chan even said that if I couldn't do it, she'll give this doll to Hazuki-chan's sister as a gift.

—But if I succeeded, this doll will go to Hazuki-chan.

—So that's how it is.

"Mmm, is that so? Then this doll will go to Hazuki-chan."

"Eh? Really?"

"Yeah. And this doll will go to Hazuki-chan's sister."

I hand over the large doll in my hand over to Hazuki-chan. It should be tough for her petite body to carry such a large doll, but she still received it delightedly.

"This is great! Thank you, onii-chan!"

"No problems. It'll be great if your sister can cheer up."

I patted her head. Hazuki-chan seems to enjoy it as she slowly closes her eyes.

"Uu~ Ah, that's right! Onii-chan, can you lend me your ear?"

"Eh? What is it? Are you going to say a secret to me or something?"

"Don't ask, just lend me your ear."

Is she about to thank me? I'm really touched. One can't become a proper adult if the person can't even say 'thank you' or 'sorry'.

"Okay, what is it?"

I bent over to match her height, but unexpectedly—

"Thank you, onii-chan♪"

Whoosh! A cute sensation passes my face. Eh? This...don't tell me this is...

"Wha, wha, wha..."

"Onii-chan may be an idiot, but he's so gentle! Hazuki-chan loves you! When I grow up, I'll let you become my husband!"

Without waiting for me to reply, Hazuki-chan skips out of the park.

Re, recently, these elementary school students are...

I touched my face with my hand, seemingly wanting to wipe away the soft sensation that's left on the face. Even without looking at the mirror, I know my face is red. How, how embarrassing...she's just an elementary school kid...

"Hoo...time for me to go back as well..."

After lifting my bag up and slinging it over my back, I head off towards the exit of the park. While exiting, I see a familiar figure yesterday. That person is—

"Excuse me...are you Himeji-san?"

"Ah, yes, what is it—YO, YOSHII-KUN!"

So it's Himeji-san. It sure is hard to find another girl as pretty. I can't possibly be mistaken.

"Sorry, I seemed to have scared you."

"No, no worries. I was just dazed..."

Our conversation got interrupted just like that. This, this is really awkward...what should I say to a friend who I haven't met for a long time?

"Erm, that...it's really a coincidence that we met here. Did you just finish class? But you look rather tired here, are you?"

"Yes, because I stayed up all night..."

"Hei~so Himeji-san would also stay up."

The impression she gives is that she lives her life normally, but it's unexpected that she would stay up.

"That's not it, I just stayed up last night, because I have something I need to do no matter what..."

She inadvertently yawned as she continued to talk. Himeji-san sure is cute when she lets out some tears due to sleepiness.

"Then, I'll be going off in this direction, goodbye."

"Ah, mm, byebye."

I waved my hand to Himeji-san, who bowed to me courteously.

While walking home, I just realized—oh ya, why did Himeji-san appear in such a place?

"...There was a case of theft in the staffroom."

The next morning, during self-study period, Ironman suddenly mentioned this. He's definitely referring to the bag of confiscated items that we got yesterday.

"Such a tragedy worth being angry over, don't you think so, Yoshii?"

He actually threw this question at me. As expected of Ironman, he must have realized that I was the perpetrator, but who will follow you obediently?

"Yeah, sure is worth sighing over."

I naturally replied with these few words. No problems, I got everything under control.

"Really? Speaking of which, that culprit even took sensei's books."

Hm? Books? Is he referring to that bundle of books? Wasn't he going to throw them away?

"And that culprit actually had the guts to use his own identity to sell my books to a second-hand shop."

"Is that so, he sure has guts."

"Yeah, hahahaha!"

"Ahhahaha..."

Ironman and I started laughing with all enthusiasm. Really, we're laughing with all sorts of happiness—at least it looked that way if not for those eyes.

"YOSHII! GET READY TO DIE!!!"

"So, sorry! Who knew that it was sensei's collection, I didn't—"

"Are you saying that you didn't even think of it?"

"No, I did think about it, but then I thought 'since its Ironman's, it doesn't matter~'! OW! OUCH! SENSEI! MY SKULLCAP GOT SMASHED IN BY YOU!"

"So you idiot has the highest suspicion. Looks like I have to be even more careful and watch you."

"Sensei! I'm feeling that I've been watched by you all this time, there's no way for you to watch me further!"

"No, there still is, right? I got a really precious title of honor that's suitable for you—"

"Eh, this is..."

"Everyone at the staff meeting this morning have all agreed, so accept this. This is a present that sensei's handing you."

From who knows when, Ironman suddenly has a piece of paper in his hand. This plain white paper has only a single line on it.

—Yoshii Akihisa.

The above mentioned has been designated as the 'Punishment Inspector' of Fumitzuki Gakuen.

☆

"Onee-chan!"

Hm? Hazuki, what's up?"

"Well, this is for onee-chan!"

"Eh? Isn't this the Noi doll that I always wanted? How did you..."

"Because onee-chan looked so lethargic. Hazuki prepared it for onee-chan to cheer onee-chan up!"

"Hazuki...really, you...thank you, onee-chan's really happy!"

"Schoolwork may be tough, but you must work hard, Minami nee-chan!"

"Hm, I'll do my best! I'll feel like I lost if I continue to mess around like this. And also..."

"And also what?"

"I'm mindful of someone in school."

"Eh? Onee-chan's mindful of someone? Who is it? How is that person like?"

"Well~as repayment of the Noi doll, I'll only say this to Hazuki. That person is in the same class as me, and he's one huge idiot~"

Fumizuki News (An interview with Yoshii Akihisa from Class 2-F)

When I was young, my grandpa would often say this to me,

"Akihisa, no matter whether it's being a thief or whatever, you have to aim to be number 1. Continue to work hard and progress."

Right now, I have some things to say to my grandpa in heaven.

Gramps... I have achieved what you expected me to do--

<<RANKED NO. 1 IN 'MOST SUITABLE BOY TO BE DRESSED IN GIRL'S CLOTHING'>>

<<RANKED NO. 1 IN 'THE ONE GUY YOU DON'T WANT TO BE CALLED AN IDIOT BY'>>

<<RANKED NO. 1 IN 'THE MOST POPULAR BOY (HOMOSEXUAL GROUP)>>

The above are the titles that the triple-champion Yoshii Akihisa-kun earned for himself.

Also nominated in the 'most suitable boy to be dressed in girl's clothing', Kinoshita Hideyoshi-kun, was barred from the competition after multiple meetings in order to avoid unfair competition.

Originally planned for the second issue 'Sugawa Ryo failed again? The truth behind all the multiple failures!' was delayed due to certain circumstances.

MIZUKI HIMEJI

Me and Thugs and a Love Letter

僕と暴徒とラブレター

Hello Yoshii Akihisa-kun:

I'm sorry to write this letter to you so suddenly, but I have something that I really want to tell Yoshii-kun, so this is why I started to write this letter.

Does Yoshii-kun still remember me? We were in the same class during third grade, you know. From that moment, I always felt that Yoshii-kun's a really interesting person, and is always the one that cheers others up. No matter what happens, you'll always stand up to encourage everyone. When I was class rep once, you helped me out a lot. I really think that Yoshii-kun's really amazing. Though I didn't join you and play around, my heart always felt warm whenever I see Yoshii-kun, whether it's the classroom or the field.

When we were in Middle school, although we didn't manage to be in the same class, I continued to hear rumors of you. When we occasionally met each other, my heart would beat really fast. Isn't that strange? Why is it so? I often asked myself.

Maybe it's a coincidence, but when I heard that you entered the same High school as me, I was really happy.

During the summoning exam, you stepped up to protect me immediately. At that moment, I couldn't fool myself anymore—I think, maybe I love you...until now, I finally realized my feelings for you.

I love you.

Right now, it took me all of my courage just to express my feelings to you. Will it be good to let Yoshii-kun understand my feelings and slowly bond ourselves together?

This letter's basically my own feelings for you, so I'm really sorry. If you have someone you're dating or like, then I'm really sorry about it.

But then. But then, I really love you. I love you the most.

☆

"Ooo~ how did I end up coming to school this early?"

Such a clear sky today, the air sure is clean, and the sunlight drenches my body as I walk on."

It's less chaotic and squeezy when I go to school early today, as if I'm on a quiet empty street. How refreshing.

"The ancient people said that the early bird catches the worm. Don't know what I'll get today~"

After school yesterday, I thought of taking a nap, only to unexpectedly sleep till daylight, so I ended up waking up 2 hours earlier than usual.

Once I woke up, I came to school without thinking. However, the weather today's so good, I knew I should have done my laundry first.

"Let's see, what should I do first — hm?"

While pondering and walking, I suddenly find a familiar figure in front of the school gate. Short-hair cut, light brown skin and sturdy muscles; isn't that Iron— let me try that again, isn't that Nishimura-sensei? Either way, he's still my homeroom teacher. Better say hello to him.

"Morning, sensei!"

I energetically greeted him from behind. Ironman turns back with a light-hearted smile that I never saw before.

"Oh, morning. Participating in morning club activities? How—"

He stopped.

"Sensei?"

"—Sorry, I was mistaken."

"You mistook me for someone else? Aiya, no need to specially apologize to me for that."

"What are your intentions for coming to school so early, Yoshii?"

The moment he said this, the light-hearted smile on his face is replaced with a wary expression.

"Eh..so sensei's mistake is the attitude to me?"

Did I really do so many bad things...?

"As a teacher, it's obvious that I have to be wary of you, but it's just nice that you're here. With that 'punishment inspector' ability of yours, I'll have less things to do."

"Woah, speaking of that 'punishment inspector', you're going to make me work?"

"That's right. Go keep those old goal posts."

"Really, I shouldn't have come so early..."

I can't help but sigh.

'Punishment inspector' — this is the method of punishment that the 'test summoning system' of our Fumitzuki Gakuen uses. The main idea is to follow the teacher's orders and do all sorts of oddjobs.

This 'test summoning system' is a coincidence formed by science and the supernatural. Since this decides the strength of the summoning system, Fumitzuki Gakuen is a test school that uses this as an incentive to encourage students to study hard. The school's protocol is to use the summoned beasts to fight, and this will definitely pump the students up better than ordinary tests.

"You should be regretful of the attitude that turned you into a 'punishment inspector' and not about coming to school early today, right?"

Ironman looks like he has given up as he sighed deeply.

"Uu...but I haven't done anything so bad that the Heavens won't condone it..."

"...You actually have the cheek to say such words? Enough talk, hurry up and get onto the field."

"Okay, okay."

Being led by Ironman, I unhappily entered the field. Those who're running on the track, are they track members doing morning exercise? They sure look energetic.

"It's your turn, Yoshii."

"Got it—summon."

Under Ironman's supervision, I summoned my summoned beasts.

The many magical arrays appear beside me, and a super-deformed version of me appears. The three-head sized body is cute, but one can't underestimate it's vicious strength. Though the strength of a summoned beast is decided by the caster's points. My points are still enough to be stronger than men by many times. However, it's just used to do oddjobs.

"Good, drag that goalpost away."

"Okay~"

The summoned beast obeys my instructions as it easily carries the goalposts that's numerous times taller than it.

"Bring it to the dump outside the city."

"HOW MANY KILOMETERS DO YOU THINK THAT IS, SENSEI!?"

At least give me a lorry to use!

"Just joking. Take it over and place it near the school gate. Be careful not to block the entrance."

"What now, you scared me~"

"Thinking about the damages you caused, this level of punishment is nothing."

"Uuu..."

Regarding that, I'm a bit sorry about that, but at least understand my circumstances...

"The net will have to be separate."

"Sigh...looks like there won't be anything good today..."

Early bird catches the worm—who said so?

☆

I followed Ironman's instructions and took down the net. I then moved the goalposts over to the school gate. Without knowing it, I almost couldn't make it to self-study period. There's no time to move the net over to the gym storage room, so let's just go to class.

Just as I was thinking this as I open my shoe locker, there seems to be something similar to a love letter.

"WHA, WHAT'S GOING OOONNNN!!!"

This unexpected development caused me to shout out. Ca-ca-ca-calm down, Yoshii Akihisa! You'll die if you think too highly of yourself! Anyway, let's just check through the contents first--

"Yo, Akihisa, what's up?"

"WAAHH!!"

Someone just called my name. I frantically stuffed the letter into my pocket. That was scary!

"Ah, ahh, it's Yuuji. Morning."

"Morning."

Raising his hand to say hello to me is my classmate, Sakamoto Yuuji. This guy doesn't look like he has much of a brain, but he's still our class F's representative.

"Oh, oh my~ quite the nice morning! Sure feels like something good will happen this morning!"

"...Why are you so excited?"

"I, I I'm not excited or anything!"

"No way, right? I just saw something like a letter in your hand or something..."

Ugh! He saw it? If anyone sees me with this letter, those guys in our class will wallop me out of jealously!

"Just, just a pampley, that's all! Forget about that, we'll be late for self-study period if we don't hurry up."

In order to avoid this, I immediately lift the soccer net up and rush forward. Truthfully though, we're really almost late.

"Oh, that late already? We're in school now, so it's a waste if you're late."

Yuuji's running behind me. Good, seems like I managed to slip out of this.

And the next problem is—where should I read this letter? There'll be trouble if I read it in a crowded place...what should I do?

☆

"Kudou."

"Here."

"Kubo."

"Here."

We managed to dash into class just as the bell rang. Before we could even rest a bit, Ironman walks into the class and starts to take attendance. One can't really tell from his appearance, but he's really a punctual teacher.

"Kondo."

"Here."

"Saito."

"Here."

The calm and lazy attendance taking is of common procedure, and everyone in class replies Ironman in a sleepy tone.

This is a silent moment in class. In this spring morning, today's the same and the past, as we continue to welcome the peaceful daily—

"Sakamoto."

"...Akihisa seemed to have gotten a love letter."

"KILL HIM!!!" —But Yuuji's words destroyed all the peace.

"Yu, Yuuji, what are you talking about!?"

I definitely lowered my volume, but it doesn't seem to get past everyone's ears. I really feel that there's something wrong with the students in this class.

"WHAT'S GOING ON! HOW DID YOSHII GET THAT LETTER!?"

"SINCE HE GOT IT, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO! HURRY UP AND FIND IF THERE'RE ANY LOVE LETTERS NEAR OUR SEATS!!"

"NO! I CAN ONLY FIND A ROTTEN BREAD AND A HALF-EATEN BREAD!?"

"LOOK THOROUGHLY!"

"...FOUND IT! IT'S A SEALED BREAD!'

"WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR!!?"

The angry roars start to echo throughout the class. As I expected, these guys have gone crazy with jealously.

"YOU PEOPLE BETTER SHUT UP!'

—Silence.

Ironman's violent roar caused the entire class to turn silent. Ho, good, good.

"Tezuka."

"Must kill Yoshii!"

"Todo."

"Must kill Yoshii!"

"Tozawa."

"Must kill Yoshii!"

"EVERYONE CALM DOWN! WHY DID IT BECOME 'MUST KILL YOSHII'!?"

"KEEP QUIET, YOSHII!!"

"SENSEI, YOU SHOULDN'T BE SCOLDING ME, RIGHT? IF THIS KEEPS UP, EVERYONE IN CLASS WILL BEAT ME, KICK ME AND DEAL WITH ME THROUGH ALL SORTS OF VIOLENT MEANS!"

"Nitta."

"Must kill Yoshii!"

"Fuda."

"Must kill Yoshii viciously!"

"Negishi."

"Must kill Yoshii and dice him up!"

They, they aren't listening at all...why are these guys so troublesome.

"Alright, no one's late or absent today, so I hope that everyone can study hard today."

After the attendance was taken, Ironman walks out of the classroom. Doesn't this guy notice the terrifying killer intent in this classroom at all?

"WAIT, SENSEI! DON'T LEAVE! DON'T ABANDON YOUR CUTE STUDENT!"

In order to protect myself, I tried all I could to stop Ironman. It's no longer time to save face.

"You're wrong, Yoshii."

Ironman's places his hand on the door as he replies. I'm mistaken? What's he trying to say?

"You're one extremely ugly guy."

"I NEVER THOUGHT OF HEARING THAT, YOU BIG IDIOT!"

"Everyone got to pay attention to class."

"PLEASE WAIT, SENSEI!!! SENSEI!!!"

My cry was ever empty and agonizing, but Ironman has already walked out of the classroom, not even looking back. Looks like I can only face all the terrifying killing intent that's flowing in the classroom. Before the first period teacher arrives, there'll definitely be a rain of blood.

"Aki~ can you please explain?" Suddenly, a strong force nearly dislocated my joints as the hands grabbed my shoulders.

"Ah, ah haha...Minami, you look really scary, you know?"

"You received a letter? Who wrote it to you? What was it about?"

Though she's smiling, the slightly trembling hands seem to be trembling hard, as the butterfly knot on the ponytail seems like a devil's horn. That expression's really terrifying.

"Ah...that...that..."

Truthfully, as I was in a rush, I kept the letter without reading it, so I don't know what is it about. Speaking of which, I want to ask you what kind of letter it is. Uu~I really want to hide alone somewhere and read the contents!

"Don't talk too much, hurry up and hand me your fingers—no, that letter!"

What! What will happen to my fingers if I don't do so?

"That, Yoshii-kun..."

A voice that's as delightful as a silver bell rings behind me.

"Hm? Yes?"

The one who spoke is the rose among the thorns in our class—Himeji Mizuki-san. Soft fluffy hair, soft looking breasts, a cute looking face; seeing her like this, I guess it'll be another day of guys working hard to chase after her.

"That...if possible, that...I, I want to read that letter as well..."

Nudge nudge, shy looking Himeji-san's really cute! But even so, I can't just let her do so.

"Erm...sorry."

Thus, I honestly apologized to her, since I don't want to reveal the contents of the letter.

"But, but..."

I already refused, yet Himeji-san's not giving up. However—

"Even if it's Himeji-san's request, I can't agree to that."

"But, I don't want to do something cruel to Yoshii-kun!"

"HOLD ON A MINUTE! IS HIMEJI-SAN GOING TO JOIN THE RANKS OF THOSE WHO'RE GOING TO BULLY ME!?"

To think that Himeji-san has become one with the low-scoring class F.

"Everyone please calm down."

Just at this moment, a clapping sound can be heard from the frontdesk. The one who spoke up is our class F's representative, my bad friend Sakamoto Yuuji.

"Right now, the problem isn't to read the letter Akihisa got."

The words that Yuuji said sure are convincing. Hmm, that's the way! Even if he's completely corrupted, we're still friend.

"The problem is—WHAT KIND OF WEIRD MEANS ARE WE GOING TO DEAL WITH AKIHISA!!!"

"THE PROPOSAL'S ALL WRONG, YOU DAMNED BASTARD!!!"

I immediately grabbed my bag and dashed out of the classroom at the fastest speed I could muster. Right now, I can only rely on myself!

"DON'T YOU DARE ESCAPE! FORM GROUPS AND HUNT HIM DOWN!!!"

"TAKE HIS LETTER AWAY!!! KILL YOSHII!!"

"SEARCH AND DEATH!!!"

"WE MUST AT LEAST WRECK HIM!!"

I could hear all the roars from the corridor. Again, I felt it first-hand that if it's this kind of things, our class F becomes more united.

☆

"FOUND YOSHII!! HE'S RUNNING TO AN EMPTY CLASSROOM!"

"ROGER THAT! HURRY UP AND CHASE HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! I'LL CONTACT EVERYONE!!"

"OK! SQUAD B WILL MOVE FROM THE FRONT, SQUAD C WILL CUT HIM DOWN FROM THE SIDE!"

"ROGER!"

While dashing madly down the corridor, I could hear this conversation.

They actually gathered in groups in such a short time to hunt me down. Why is our class F acting in such an overkill manner when it comes to this useless trivial stuff!?

Alright! Since you want it like this, I'll show no mercy!

"HAND OVER THAT LETTER, YOSHII!!!"

"FOR YOU TO GET HAPPINESS IS LIKE A DREAMER'S TALK!"

5 classmates have already blocked my getaway. They should be the ones from the group ordered to surround me, and there're also some guys behind me.

Unable to do anything, I can only hide in the abandoned classroom, and

everyone chasing after me have barricaded the classroom tightly.

Seeing me hide inside, they all stood outside the entrance to prevent me from escaping. But for me who's being chased, this definitely is the best chance.

"Watch this!"

I got ready to attack.

My attack is the soccer net that I took down this morning. I toss it right at their heads.

"Wha, what's going on?"

"Calm down! This is just a net! The ones on the outside, hurry up, get out and get Yoshii."

"Damn it, the net is wet. It's sticking onto the bodies~~"

Being stunned and yet able to make the correct decision immediately, I'll give you that. But unfortunately, you guys are a tad too late!

"You guys just need to rest on the sickbay's beds."

I'm definitely holding onto something dangerous. My trapped classmates widen their eyes in disbelief.

"WHAT! YOSHII, THAT'S..."

"RUN AWAY! EVERYONE GET OUT FROM THE NET!!!"

"Good night, everyone."

I tossed the activated taser at the wet net. The next moment, there's a cackling sound and some burnt smell.

"WWWAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!"

Hearing my classmates let out blood-curdling screams, I walk out of the classroom.

If I want to read the letter in a quiet place, I'll have to immobilize everyone in class F. if so, I can only fight till the very end!

☆

"Where did that Yoshii run off to? I definitely saw him run down here!"

"Be careful, he should be hiding nearby."

"Squads F and G have been eliminated. There's only one enemy, but don't let down your guard."

In the old books storage room in the old school building, my classmates start to exchange words with each other. Maybe they're acting rather wary since I took down quite a few groups through violent means. I peeped from being the bookshelf, and sees that they're leaning their backs against each other to hide any blind spots.

But if they're gathered together, they'll bind themselves together. Don't they understand this?

I held my breath as I move to the bookshelf near them. I then sneakily pulled one book out and threw it to another corner—BAM!

"What's that sound?"

"Is it Yoshii?

Everyone reacted to the sound as they turn their heads to the same direction. If so, wouldn't there be a blind spot already.

"Rea~dy!"

Next, all I need to do is to push the bookshelf down.

"WHAT!"

"DAMN It—!"

At this moment, since they have already turned their attention to the other side, even if they realize that the bookshelf is collapsing here, they can't react in time, and thus everyone was crushed under the bookshelf.

"HAHA! THOSE WHO TRIES TO OBSTRUCT OTHER'S LOVE PATH WILL END UP LIKE THIS!'

From the corner of my eye, I glanced at my classmates who're trying to crawl out from the bottom of the bookshelf as I walk out of the old books storage room.

"DAMN YOU, YOSHII! YOU TRAITOR!"

"DON'T YOU DARE FORGET THIS! WE'LL DEFINITELY WRECK YOUR HAPPINESS!"

"...Really, how twisted are these guys?"

Once I walked out of the old books storage room, I immediately got a broom to hold the entrance down and block it completely. Seems like I dealt with all my pursuers.

"Good good, now all that's left to do is—WAAAHHH!!!"

A bad presence caused me to instinctively take a few steps backwards. At the place where I was, there're many ball-point pens and sharp knives there're stabbed onto the floor.

"Who's there!"

"...Traitors must atone for their sin with death."

Holding all sorts of stationery in his hands is my classmate Tsuchiya Kouta. This guy has quite the overwhelming pervertedness, yet he tries to hide it. His nickname is Muttsulini, and he's my friend — no wait, he's no longer my friend, but an enemy I have to take down!"

"Get ready, Muttsulini!"

I clench my fist and dash forward. Sorry, but you have to quietly rest here!

"...I'll throw a penknife next."

"Alright, then let's talk it through,"

I can't exert violence on my good friend!

"...Got it."

"Say your request first."

Though I said it, I knew what he will request. He'll say something like 'hand that letter over'. Let me see, what should I use to negotiate with him?

"...My request is—"

Muttsulini coldly states his request

"—to murder you."

"HOLD ON A MINUTE! WHY DID YOU JUST JUMP STRAIGHT TO MY EXECUTION!"

I have never went through such a difficult negotiation.

"...Deal broken."

"Damn it! Looks like I can only do this the hard way!"

I gather all my concentration and aims at the penknife in Muttsulini's hand.

Speaking of which, it's just a love letter. Is there really a need to start slaughtering friends?

"...Don't worry. I won't aim at your eye."

"Muttsulini, I'm not an idiot who'll be relaxed after hearing what you said!"

"...Really?"

Whoosh! The penknife lets out an air-ripping sound as it attacks me. The target is — MY RIGHT EYE!

"YOU, YOU LIED!"

I immediately use my hand to block it, and the penknife drops onto the floor. Eh? It didn't hit me? Was the blade not unsheathed?

"...An opening."

"Uu!"

Muttsulini came rushing in just as I was stunned. Damn it!

"Muttsulini, do you know Himeji-san's bust measurement?"

In order to protect my own life, I frantically mentioned something Muttsulini will be interested in. Please take the bait, you huge silent pervert!

"...This is common knowledge!"

No way, I can't shake his concentration at all! Speaking of which, is this really common knowledge? I don't even know!

"Then, then, once I get a girlfriend, I'll send those precious treasures to you, is it alright?"

"...(stops.)"

Muttsulini suddenly stopped. Good! He took the bait!

"...When?"

This friend of mine is one guy that can't be underestimated. He actually went directly to confirming the time instead of confirming the contents and amount.

"Let me think, how about next week?"

"...Deal made."

To think I actually bribed him like this. I'll use this to deal with him the next time I end up as an enemy of Muttsulini.

"Then I'm going."

Just as I step aside and prepare to leave, Muttsulini suddenly reaches his hand out to block me. Is there anything else?

"...This is for you to protect youself."

While saying this, Muttsulini thrusts a small bag at me.

"Protect me?"

"...There're some knives inside. Take them out if anything happens."

To be honest, these knives should be illegal. However, these are things that I'm really grateful for, since there're still a few people that I haven't took down, and they're definitely antagonistic towards me.

"Thanks. I'll use them when I'm in a fix."

"...(Thumbs up)."

After giving me a thumbs up, Muttsulini turns away and leaves. I can't continue to stay here. Got to find a place to read that letter. It'll be bad if the letter reads 'I'll be waiting for you at the rooftop during lunchtime' and I can only read this in the afternoon.

"Oh yeah, I better go to the roof to check on everyone."

No one should be at the roof. If so, I can go there and read the letter properly. Also, that place may be where the confession will take place. Okay, I decided, let's head to the roof!

Right now, I'm on the second level. Got to climb up the stairs if I want to get there.

And thus, on the platform of the stairs—

"I finally found you, Aki!"

"GACK! MINAMI!?"

My eternal nemesis is here.

The killing intent that's radiating from her body is already killing my muscles, and it seems like it'll explode the moment she touches me.

I tighten my nerves, trying to find a way to get past the second level platform. Unexpectedly, she continues to step forward in a calm manner, saying out her requests for me to choose from.

"Either you hand me the letter and let me kill you or let me kill you before taking the letter. Choose one."

That's strange, why can't I choose an option where I can remain alive?

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT! IT SHOULD BE NONE OF MINAMI'S BUSINESS IF I GET A LETTER, RIGHT!?"

Basically, this is her fault anyway! It'll be great if I can defuse this crisis.

"Unrelated to me? Really...you really think so, Aki..."

"Eh?"

Minami looks like she got really hurt or something. I reconsidered what I just said. Is there anything wrong with me getting a girlfriend?"

"Do you mean..."

"This fact is really embarrassing, so I didn't mention it just now, but I, you..."

Completely different from her ferocious expression, Minami right now looks so pitiful. For some reason, my heart starts to race. What's with this feeling?

"Because of you, I got 3rd in the 'the girl you don't want to date the most' poll!"

"Farewell!"

What's this feeling? How about, monstrously terrifying!?

I followed my basic instincts and escape. Though I want to run off to the rooftop, I start to jump 3 steps down the stairs for the first time, all just to escape for this monstrous demon.

"You're still thinking of escaping? I won't allow you to gain happiness after me being forced into despair like this!"

"There're still people who beat you in the poll! Isn't that good!?"

"What's good about that!? How many people do you think there are below me!?"

Let me see. There're about 300 students in the second year. So—

"About 150?"

"Hundred and fif...HOW DO YOU INTEND TO COMPENSATE!? TAKE RESPONSIBLITY!"

"Even if you ask me to, I can't!"

"Anyway, hurry up and hand that letter over!"

"I DON'T WANT TO! YOU'LL DEFINITELY RIP THAT LETTER TO SHREDS!"

"I WON'T DO THAT! I WILL PRINT DOZENS OF COPIES OF THIS LETTER AND SCATTER THEM ALL OVER THE SCHOOL TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING AGAIN!"

"ISN'T THAT SCARIER!!?"

Damn it! I really want to escape, but I just can't get away from her! Got to stop Minami!

"Oh yeah, Minami, while running down the stairs, I know—"

"What?"

"—you're wearing white today!"

"Wha..."

Minami suddenly stops and uses both hands to push her skirt down. Stupid girl! In this situation, will I even bother to look at your underwear!?

"WOOOHHH!!"

Using this window of opportunity, I immediately increase the distance between me and Minami. The chance to escape will die off soon!

After rushing down the staircase, I then dash down the corridor.

"Ah, Yoshii-kun. How can you run down the corridor?"

Ahh, there's no lessons now? Slowly walking down the corridor, the English teacher slowly noticed my presence. So it's Endo-sensei. Sure appeared at the right time.

"Sorry Endo-sensei, but I got asked to do errands."

I stood in front of sensei to admit my mistake.

"You're asked to do errands?"

"Yeah, the teacher asked me to go to the empty classroom to move some desks back."

This is definitely a lie, but Endo-sensei believes it without a second word.

"is that so? However, you can't run down the corridor."

"I'll take note of that. Well, sensei, I have a little request."

"Hm, what is it?"

"Those tables are rather heavy, so can sensei grant me permission to summon?"

I have to get a teacher's permission to summon a summoned beast.

"Aki! You dare to trick me!"

Damn it, Minami's catching up!

"Sensei, please follow me for a while!"

"Eh? Ah...okay."

I dragged sensei over to one of the nearby classrooms. Good thing there're a lot of abandoned classrooms in the old building. Sure got saved now.

"Sensei! Please hurry up and grant me permission to summon!"

"Uu...I don't really know what's going on...okay, I'll allow you to summon."

"Great! Summon!"

In response to my call, my summoned beast appears from the floating magic array. As long as this guy is around, I'll have no problems even if that enemy's Minami.

"I'm definitely wearing grassy-green underwear today! How could you see it as white!"

A second later, Minami appears. I don't really mind, but...

"Minami, you don't really have to tell me that."

"Ah!"

My reminder caused Minami to blush heavily. If Muttsulini's to hear this, he'll be absolutely delighted.

"CHANCE!"

"WAH!"

While Minami's wavering, I pushed her into a corner of the classroom. And then —

"Heyo~ watch me!"

I already prepared my summoned beast to let the student's storage cupboard at the back of the classroom and use it to create a road block.

"Oi, what's are you doing! You're too despicable! Let me out!"

DONG DONG DONG!!! Minami slams hard at the storage cupboard. With the girl's strength of hers, she should be unable to move such a large thing. I finally rendered Minami powerless.

"What are you doing, Yoshii-kun!"

Seeing this, Endo-sensei lecture me, and the summoned beast immediately disappears. Seems like sensei cancelled my summoning right.

"Sorry! But this is an emergency!"

"Ah! Hold on a minute!"

Ignoring sensei, I again dash down the corridor. A while later, just a bit, and I can open the letter...thinking about this happiness, the dashing feet feel light and fleeting.

"I waited for you for a long time, Yoshii."

My classmate Sugawa-kun is already getting into position as he waits there for me.

"Sugawa-kun, you're intending to stop me?"

"Of course, I want you to die right now."

At the same time he said this, he pulled out something from his back.

"A, a wooden sword..."

" borrowed this from the kendo club in order to stop you!"

"WAH! WOAH~~"

Without saying anything else, Sugawa-kun hacks over at me without holding back. I immediately dodged aside, and at least is barely able to avoid that attack.

"HAND OVER THAT LETTER, YOSHII!"

"Uu..."

I unconsciously bit my lip. To think that this guy will actually prepare a weapon. Right now, I have no chance of winning if I don't go all out. If I have some sort of a weapon—hm? A weapon?

"Oh ya, I still have that!"

I reached into my pocket and grab a small bag. That's right, this is what Muttsulini handed over to me just now, the bag that's full of knives.

"Uu! So you prepared some weapons as well!"

Knowing that his advantage no longer exists, Sugawa-kun seems rather impatient.

"Very good! Then we're even!"

I grabbed a knife from the bag and immediately shrink the distance Sugawa-kun.

Let's decide this now, Sugawa-kun!

"Damn it! I haven't lost yet!"

Sugawa-kun swings his wooden sword down. Unfortunately—

"Too weak!"

I took half a step aside, and his attack nearly hits me, only to miss. And having swung the wooden sword, Sugawa-kun is completely open for an attack as he stands in front of me. There're holes all over the place.

I haven't let a chance slip by, as I aim my nailcutter at Sugawa-kun—

"What the heck, how can I win with this nailcutter, this idiotic me!"

I dejectedly collapse onto the floor. Though it's true that a nailcutter is a type of knife.

"Yoshii...you're one huge idiot..."

Sugawa-kun's pitifully gazes at me.

"Da, damn it! If that's the case, I'll use the nailcutter on you! At least it's better than fighting barehanded!"

"That's not right, isn't it? No matter how I think, you'll have a better chance of winning if you go barehanded, right?"

"SHUT UP!"

In this silent 3rd storey of the old building, Sugawa-kun and I exchanged roars.

"WAHH! MY FINGERNAILS! MY FINGERNNNAAAIIILLLSSS!!!"

From above, I stared down at Sugawa-kun, who's limp and clutching his hand painfully.

To think that I actually won this battle.

"I was rather shocked myself. But then, the most important thing right now is to go up. Sorry."

"Yo, Yoshii...you traitor..."

Leaving behind Sugawa-kun, who someone's gasping even though I merely cut his fingernails off, I continue to climb up the stairs and head towards the roof. If I can get past the 4th level and past the roof—

"So you came, Akihisa!"

"Yoshii-kun, please surrender quietly."

"It's Yuuji and Himeji-san..."

While getting up the staircase, the ones blocking me are the great demon king—Yuuji and Himeji-san.

"How did you two know that I'll come here?"

"Because the roof is the best place for a confession. With that simple brain of yours, you might think that you can watch over everyone's actions here. So I

guessed that you'll come here."

Damn it! As expected of Yuuji, he guessed all of my thought process accurately.

"You could have just hidden inside the toilet and read the letter without any interference."

Ah!

"Sorry, Yuuji. I just got a stomachache. Got to go to the toilet."

"Yoshii-kun. Don't tell me you haven't realized it?"

Himeji-san stares worriedly at me. I can't stand that gaze!

"Yuuji, why must you stop me? Even if you do this, it wouldn't be of any benefit to you, right?"

In order not to let him stick onto me any further, I got to make this clear.

Yuuji looks serious as he answers me.

"You're right, I won't get anything good from this. No, before that, I have no intention of getting a girlfriend."

"If so, why..."

"That's not the problem, Akihisa, I just..."

That bad friend stares at me without any hesitation and continues,

"—hate seeing you getting happiness!"

"You're definitely the worst friend!"

Even I'm starting to wonder if we're really friends.

"Akihisa, I won't tell you something so old-fashioned like 'hand that letter over'. Show me your best and bring it on."

Yuuji takes off his coat and undoes his tie. Looking at the physique of this bad

friend of mine, there's no excess fat on his body. Those forceful looking muscle lines are what all men wants.

"Can you help me take my coat, Himeji?"

"Ah, okay."

After passing his coat over to Himeji-san and undoing his tie, being unrestrained, Yuuji gets into position as he swings a few punches. Whoosh, quite a few sharp sounds. Just this alone, and I know the difference between an amateur and an expert. This guy...he's really trying to kill me.

"Yoshii-kun, you better give up..."

Himeji-san moves beside me and looks worried as she stares at my face. It's obvious why she would be worried for me; as what his appearance shows, Yuuji's really used to fighting, and I don't really have much of a chance if I go head on. But—

"Thanks for worrying about me, but I have no intention of giving up."

For the girl who summoned enough courage to write this letter to me, for my own future, I can't just run away here!

"Really...I understand. I won't try to stop you again."

"...Sorry, I know that you're doing this for my own good."

"No...it's because this is Yoshii-kun's style."

"My style? Oh yeah, can you help me hold this?"

"Ah, okay."

Like Yuuji, I took off my coat. My movements are definitely a lot smoother. Speaking of which, I haven't fought seriously for a long time, and the opponent's Yuuji this time. My body would actually tremble, and it shouldn't be because I took off my coat.

"...Akihisa."

"Bring it on, Yuuji."

I clench my fist and got ready to fight.

If I beat this guy, I can just read the letter without any—

"...You're really an idiot."

"Eh?"

Yuuji looks rather listless, but he's not staring at me—but the coat that Himeji-san's holding onto.

"That, that letter, that letter should be in the pocket...can I read it?"

Himeji-san pulls the letter out from my coat pocket. Eh~ that's...

"NO, NO!!! READING MY LETTER WITHOUT EVEN A FIGHT, THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES!!!"

"HOW STUPID CAN YOU GET!? DON'T CARE ABOUT HIM, HIMEJI! JUST DISPOSE OF THAT LETTER!"

Yuuji grabbed me just as I'm about to grab Himeji-san.

Damn it! I can't get away! This perverted muscle freak!

"Eh? Isn't this..."

Looking back at Himeji-san, she seems bothered by the letter she's holding in her hand. Maybe she found it too easy to get and is afraid of what's inside.

"..."

No, that's not right. It shouldn't be something like that. Himeji-san would show such an expression because she's too kind and can't bear to read a letter that someone else wrote or destroy it mercilessly. I see, so there's a chance to win!

"Himeji-san."

"Eh! Ah, yes, is there anything?"

"Actually I know, gentle Himeji-san can't really stamp on other people's feelings, so you better—"

"—rip that letter apart."

"NO! THAT'S NOT IT! YOU'RE TOO DESPICABLE, YUUJI! TO ACTUALLY ADD WORDS LIKE THAT! THIS IS BASICALLY AGAINST THE RULES!"

"Okay, I got it."

"No, you shouldn't be answering 'okay' just like that, right? HIMEJI-SANN! YOU DON'T HAVE TO REALLY TEAR THE LETTER LIKE THAT! I CAN'T POSSIBLY READ IT NOW! GIVE IT BACK! GIVE ME BACK MY HAPPY FUTURE AND WHAT I SAID 4 LINES AGO!"

Just as I screamed out in despair, the letter got torn to bits, and it's no longer in its original shape as what's left are scraps of the letter.

"Really, to think that Himeji will actually tear that letter herself...sorry Akihisa."

Yuuji stares at Himeji-san in a shocked manner and then apologized to me. I'm shocked as well, because I thought that Himeji-san's a girl who won't do that sort of thing.

"At least let me do this."

Yuuji said as he picks up all the scraps on the floor.

Yeah, now's not the time to give up.

"Thanks Yuuji. I'll bet on the last probability and fix these pieces of paper back!"

"—I'll kill your last hope."

Whoosh...burning...

Ah, how warm! The strong flames seem to melt my ice cold heart...

"GYAH! NO WAY! YOU ACTUALLY BURNED THE LETTER!? IS THERE A NEED FOR YOU TO DO THAT? IF SO, I DON'T HAVE ANY CHANCE

OF READING THE LETTER ALREADY!? WHERE DID MY HAPPY FUTURE DISAPPEAR TO?"

"Akihisa, you may not understand..."

"WHAT? FORGET ABOUT THAT, HURRY UP AND GET A BUCKET OF WATER!!"

"The thing I hate most is your happiness."

"WHO WILL UNDERSTAND THAT, YOU BIG IDIOT!? YOU DESPICABLE BASTARD!!"

No matter how hard I tried, that letter was burned to a pile of ash.

"Doesn't Sakamoto-kun want to know who wrote that letter?"

Seeing the letter burned to ash, Himeji-san seems relaxed for some reason as she turns and asks Yuuji.

"I have no interest at all, since I just want to get rid of Akihisa's happiness. Besides—"

"Be, besides what?"

"I can sort of guess who wrote that letter."

"Eh?"

"If what you tore was 'someone else's' letter, it will create quite the trouble, right?"

"That, that...this, this..."

I don't really understand Himeji-san and Yuuji's conversation. Do they know who wrote that letter?

"Yuuji! Repeat that again!"

"Ahh! Yoshii-kun can't eavesdrop!"

"GYAH!!!"

"Himeji, Akihisa's neck seems to be tilted back completely."

"So, sorry! I actually did such a cruel thing."

"Well, you don't really have to worry about that. Besides, even if he remains alive now, he will be murdered by those guys."

Squeezing off the last ounce of consciousness, I listen to the voices where Yuuji pointed to.

"A~KI-~ YOU ACTUALLY DARE TO DO SUCH A THING TO ME-~"

"I'LL DEFINITELY KILL YOU, YOSHII!!!"

""""KILL HIM!!! KILL HIM!!!""""

Dear God, I beg of you, allow me to safely see the sun tomorrow.

☆

How did that happen? That disappeared letter actually went into Yoshii-kun's shoe locker! Someone must have picked it up and kindly put it in for me...

It's because of me that you ended up suffering such a terrible thing...I'm truly sorry, Yoshii-kun.

But like what Yoshii-kun told me before, I hope I can convey my feelings not through a letter, but directly to you.

So, please wait for me.

The Sakamoto Couple's Secret Love Technique Lecture

"Oi, Shouko! Tell me what's going on first!"

"...This is a chapter for us to share the secrets of our husband and wife's love to everyone."

"THAT'S TOO SCARY! EVERYTHING'S A LIE EXCEPT FOR THE 'THIS' RIGHT!?"

"...Okay, let's read a fan letter that we received."

"CAN'T YOU JUST AT LEAST LISTEN TO ME ONCE IN A WHILE FIRST!?"

"...'I'm sorry for this sudden letter, but I want to discuss something with the couple with the good relationship'."

"To the reader who sent this letter, listen carefully. My limbs are all tied up now and I can't move anywhere. Do you think that person is suited for discussing love questions? Please reconsider carefully."

"...'I have a fiance, but I'm really worried whether he will be tempted by the women beside him and do all sorts of nonsense outside. Please teach me what to do'."

"EVEN IF YOU ASK ME THAT, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!"

"...I'm also very bothered about my husband potentially being a Casanova."

"I beg of you, please don't get involved in this."

"...So now, I'm going to teach you what I think will prevent a husband from being a Casanova."

"Shouko, can I treat what you're going to say next as an ominous prelude to what's going to happen to me?"

"...First, we have to prepare three items."

"Do you need to prepare items to prevent someone from cheating?"

"...The first item-"

"What's the first item?"

"-'Handcuffs'."

"STOP, SHOUKO! I can't get rid of the notion that this is related to a criminal act!"

"...The second item-"

"You're ignoring me again. Okay, what's the second item?"

"-'Apron'."

"Hold on a minute. I can't understand what you're thinking now. Speaking of which, what are you intending to use these two items on me for?"

"...And next, the third item-"

"What's the third item?"

"-'Video camera'."

"WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU GOING TO FILM!? PUTTING HANDCUFFS ON ME AND THEN WEARING AN APRON, WHAT KIND OF SCENE ARE YOU GOING TO FILM!?"

"...Once you prepare these three items, you just need to tell your husband the terrifying consequences if he cheats on you."

"I THINK THAT YOU'RE THE SCARIEST ONE HERE!!!"

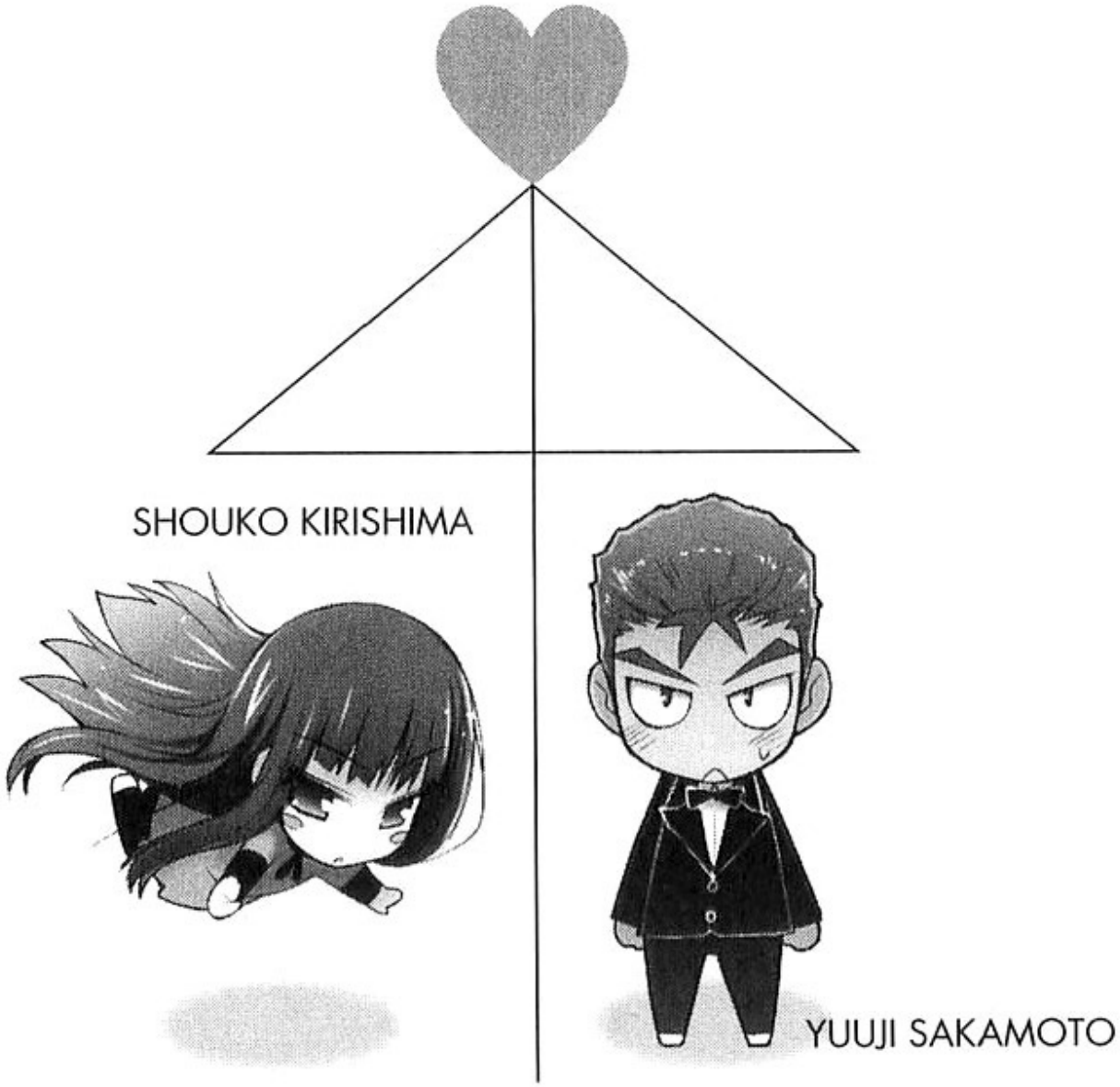
"...The above is a fan letter that's sent over from an imouto who 'loves Baka onii-chan' (11 years old)."

"AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT SENT THIS!? SEEMS LIKE THE WORLD IS DOOMED!!!"

"Speaking of which, Shouko, you were lying about those things you said earlier, right?"

"...I want at least 5 sets of cameras."

"Hold, hold on a sec, we have something to discuss."


SHOUKO KIRISHIMA
YUUJI SAKAMOTO

Me and Shouko and Kisaragi Highlands

俺と翔子と
如月ハイランド

"Akihisa."

"Hm? Yuuji, what's up?"

"I just thought of it, what will you do with those tickets?"

"Those tickets—are you talking about the free Kisaragi Highlands tickets?"

"Yeah, I remember that they have some trial run before they fully begin operations. Why don't you get Himeji to come along?"

"Wha, what are you saying, Yuuji!? If we use those tickets, the Kisaragi corporation will use all of their power to force us to marry each other! Wouldn't Himeji-san be pitiful if it ends up like this?"

"That's sort of true. They did try their best to come up with that omen of 'any couple who goes there will gain happiness'. They will probably put in lots of effort to make that a reality."

"Mmm, that's the case."

"However, I don't think Himeji will refuse."

"...Eh?"

"Well, if you summon your courage and try to ask her out, I don't think she will really refuse."

"Ah, ahhahaha, here we go again. Yuuji, you really love to make fun of me~ how can I possibly get married to Himeji-san? That's totally impossible."

"Uuu~ since you said so, I'll leave it at that. Then, if you're not going, how are you going to use those tickets?"

"I just so happen to know someone who's about to get married, so I'll just send the tickets to that person."

"Oh yeah, if someone wants to get married, the tickets will work extremely well. And if they can get married successfully, Kisaragi Corporation will be extremely happy."

"Yeah, if it's successful, everyone will be happy."

"Are those two who're getting married getting along well?"

"Nn, they just need an opportunity."

"I see, it'll be great if they can get together."

"Don't worry. They'll always be together."

☆

On a certain holiday morning, the sunlight that seeped through the gaps of the blinds and the chirping of the sparrows woke me from my dream.

When I woke up—

"...Good morning, Yuuji."

—I found Shouko standing beside my bed.

"...The weather's nice today."

Shouko pulled the blinds, causing the sunlight to shine brightly into my room.

"Hm? Ahh, seems good."

The overly bright light caused me to narrow my eyes as I closely inspected the figure of my childhood friend.

As today's a holiday, she's not wearing the school uniform. The top was a white long-sleeved knitted coat with a thin pink shirt underneath, and matching them at the bottom was a light knee-length skirt. The piece of cloth meant to hide the interior of it should be called an underskirt, right? Shouko would normally wear a T-shirt and jeans or shorts, so it seems like she deliberately dolled herself up today.

I'm totally shocked that I actually checked through Shouko's attire, since it's not in my nature. Maybe I haven't woken up, right?

I shook my head hard to get rid of the sleepy sensation, and then turned to look at Shouko.

"I haven't greeted you yet. Morning, Shouko."

"...Nn, morning."

I pulled my blanket aside and got off the bed.

Speaking of which, why did Shouko come to my room? Do I have a date with her or something?

I started to rack my just-woken-up brain—no good, I couldn't remember anything.

Since I couldn't think of anything, it meant that I didn't have a date with her, right? I see.

"Sorry, Shouko, pass me my handphone."

"...Are you going to make a call?"

"Mm, yeah."

After receiving the phone that Shouko passed over, I pressed a few buttons.

If this person is in my room, this means—

"Ah, hello? Is this the police station?"

SHE'S AN INTRUDER!

☆

THOMP THOMP THOMP THOMP THOMP!! CRRRAAAAKKKK!!!

"MOM! TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!!"

"Oh my, Yuuji, good morning."

After rushing into the kitchen, I saw my mom standing at the basin as she washed the dishes, even saying good morning to me energetically.

"WHAT MORNING!? WHY WAS SHOUKO IN MY ROOM!? I ENDED UP BEING TREATED BY THE POLICE AS SOME DELUDED MANIAC THAT CAN'T TELL WHAT'S 2-D AND 3-D!!!"

My childhood friend came into my room and woke me up—when I said that, the reaction left a pain that won't ever be erased. What I can say is that even if I overslept, this is the greatest mistake I ever made in my entire life!

"...Eh?"

Hearing my complaints, those wide eyes of my mom blinked quite a few times. She's almost 40, and yet this look was just like a kid's. Maybe it's because of this natural doll-like face that my mom looked a lot younger than what she really is. 'People often mistook me for a college student'—that's what she herself said. However, my dad and I don't believe this even one bit. No matter what, she can't possibly be seen as a college student.

"You were talking about Shouko-chan?"

Mom placed her hand on her face as she said that with a bothered look on her face.

Seeing her attitude...did Shouko sneak into my room? Mom didn't help out? If this were the case, I may have failed to think things through when I roared at her.

"Ahh, nothing much, sorry for shouting at you early in the morning. I thought that mom helped her enter my room—"

"Really, Shouko-chan's too naive. I helped her create this opportunity, yet she didn't do anything; that's really a pi—oh my, Yuuji, why are you grabbing onto your mom's face?"

"SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DID THAT!!!"

Seems like I have to educate her on the common sense a mother should have.

"...Yuuji, you can't bully mom."

"Shouko, don't say it. As a son, I have to re-educate this mother."

Appearing later, Shouko tugged my arm as she tried to stop me. Speaking of which, it's rather weird when Shouko just said 'mom' with a different tone. However, I guess I shouldn't retort back at her for my own safety.

"...if you don't listen, I'm going to read this book with mom."

Shouko pulled out an A4-sized book. Hm? That book...don't tell me—

"Hold, hold on a minute! That's not what girls should be reading! Hurry up and return it to me!"

Why on earth is it that book! That's the treasure trove that even Muttsulini would cry over! She actually found it! This is bad! Speaking of which, how did she find it? I hid it in a place that even my mom couldn't find it, even though she's living in the same house as me!

"Oh my, Shouko-chan, is that the secret book with the world history reference cover over it? Yuuji hid it in the double-layer 3rd drawer."

I have never been so envious of Akihisa's live-alone lifestyle like I am now.

"I, I got it. I'll let go of mom now."

I obediently let go of the death grip.

To actually force me to surrender with this trick. This is too despicable!

"...That's good. If so—"

Damn it! Once I get my book back, I'll hide it in a place where you two can't find it. I might as well lock it up in maximum security—

"...I'll only forgive you if you burn it."

"Sorry Shouko, but no matter what, that isn't what one will do after forgiving, right?"

Normally, if I'm forgiven, I should have my book back.

"...Then I won't forgive you even if you burn this book."

"Isn't there an option of not burning this?"

Though I have known her since elementary school, I'm occasionally unable to tell what the heck is going on in that person's mind.

"Hoho, you two still have quite the good relationship."

Having been released from the grip, my mom didn't look panicked at all. She washed the last dish and wiped her hands on her apron. Such a carefree mother.

"I don't think we have quite the good relationship here..."

"Oh my, is that so?"

My mom still showed a smiling face. This mother will most likely say 'oh my, isn't that interesting?' when she sees me knocked down by a car, right?

"Really, you two...speaking of which, what are you doing here, Shouko?"

"...Date."

"Date? Do I have a date with you?"

"...Mm."

As usual, Shouko nodded her head as she pulled out a small piece of paper.

That seems to be some sort of ticket. Let me see, that is...

"Oh my, isn't that the Kisaragi Highlands trial ticket? And it says that it's a free experience. It should be a special ticket right? You're amazing, Shouko-chan, to be able to get such a ticket~"

"...A kind soul gave it to me."

"Is that so? That's great~"

"...Yuuji, who're you calling?"

"I got something to say to some scum."

I first shut off the incoming display number of the handphone, and then dialed Akihisa's number.

After a few seconds of dialing, that damned despicable foe picked up his phone with a casual tone.

"Hello hello? Who're you looking for?"

".....I'M GOING TO KILL YOU."

"Eh? What! Who are you? That's really scar—(cuts off)"

After hearing the extremely awkward voice from the phone, I silently cut the phone line. At least I feel better now.

"...Let's go, Yuuji."

Shouko grabbed my hand. Seems like she really wants to go.

"I don't want to even if I die."

However, I definitely can't fulfill this wish of yours.

If it were just an ordinary trip to a theme park, I might consider it a bit. However, that's an activity that Kisaragi Corporation planned, there's definitely something dangerous about it.

If I'm to go along with Shouko and drop into their trap, I'll definitely be forced to to get married to her. No matter what, I have to prevent that sort of thing from happening!

"Oh my, why are you so unwilling, Yuuji? Just go out and play with Shouko."

My mom, who didn't know anything at all, said it as if it were so easy.

"Obviously, I don't want to go because of many reasons."

Only a few people, including Akihisa and me knew of the Kisaragi Corporation's plan, and even Shouko, who's from the same school didn't know anything about it. If she's to know of something like 'mobilizing the entire power of Kisaragi Corporation to force two people to marry', no matter what kind of dirty tactics she'll use, Shouko will definitely force me to join in, because she's that kind of a woman.

"...I want to go with Yuuji."

It's been about 7 years since this person started to show her affections for me. No matter what I say, she wouldn't budge. In a certain sense, I really have to respect that unwavering will of hers.

That's the case, but I have to refuse, or else I'll really be forced to get married. No matter what, I don't want to marry in High school; I want to enjoy a few more years of my free life.

Okay, since this can't be helped, I'll have to say clearly 'Shouko, you better give up'. Thus, I take a deep breath, and then say—

"Shouko."

"I don't want."

"You better give—"

Too fast! Way too fast! I only said her name!

"Shou, Shouko! Listen to me first..."

"...If you don't want to go no matter what—"

Overpowering my incomplete words, Shouko pulled out a small booklet from her bag.

"...choose one."

What Shouko pulled out was a marriage location recommendation book.

"Sorry, I have no idea how we ended up like this."

"...You swore to me before that we'll get married if you break our promise."

Why do I feel that the content of the promise was changed?

"Mommy feels that it's good to go overseas and get married, like Hawaii or some other foreign country~"

"Mom, why aren't you caring about what your own son thinks!?"

"...Yuuji, choose one. I'm going to book the venue."

"Ah, Europe seems rather good. Yuuji, which one do you think is good?"

"Uuu..."

No matter what I choose, it doesn't seem like I can avoid the issue of marriage. This scenario's way too precarious. But I'm not going to crumble due to this level of difficulty. Got to find a way to get away from it!

☆

"...I'm really too useless..."

After spending more than 2 hours on the train and on the bus, Shouko and I finally arrived in front of Kisaragi Highlands.

This, this couldn't be helped! If it's just Shouko, fine, but even my mum agreed to us getting married enthusiastically! I had to get away from that delicate, yet hard to define atmosphere! Who can blame me right now!?

"...We're finally here."

Shouko wasn't even hiding her delight as she stared at the theme park in front of her.

Okay...seeing her so happy like this, guess it's worth bringing her here. Mm hum.

"Okay, Shouko, since we're already here—"

"...Mn."

"Let's hurry up and go back."

CRACK.

"...No, I must go in."

"Hahaha, Shouko, my arm won't go in that direction."

My arm got clamped down forcefully as I told Shouko while giving off cold sweat.

Damn it, my fingers are getting numb.

"...This is what couples will do."

"Hold on Shouko! Are you thinking that this intimate act of holding hands isn't any different from surrendering?"

"?"

Seeing her head full of question marks, this woman's way too terrifying. She probably thinks that all the couples in the world will lock their arms together in order to keep their lovers around

"...Anyway, let's go in."

"GUH! At least release my hand before going! My arm will really get twisted if this keeps up!"

As my left arm got taken as a hostage, I got dragged by Shouko to the entrance. Since today's a trial operation day before the real opening, we didn't wait long before arriving in front of the attendants.

"Welcome to Kisaragi Highlands!"

This youngster doesn't look like he's Japanese, since he's smiling at us while saying that in a weird tone. He looks like an Asian alright, but I don't know if he's Japanese.

"Today's our trial day. Do you two have an entrance ticket?"

"...Yea."

Shouko produced that ticket from her pocket.

"Sorry, please excuse me."

The attendant looked back at us after seeing that coupon, and the smile that was on his face was instantly frozen.

"...Can't this ticket be used?"

Seeing the attendant's expression change, Shouko starts to look rather worried.

"Nonono, this ticket can be used. However, please hold on~"

The attendant immediately whips out a handphone from his pocket as he starts to make a call to someone.

"—It's me. Those two are here. Prepare the wedding now, I'll think of a way to stop them."

"Oi, hold on! What's with those inappropriate words!"

The youngster's expression immediately became rather scary. Is he a worker of that damned corporation that started all these?

"...Prepare the wedding?"

Shouko tilts her head in bewilderment. Since she doesn't know of what Kisaragi Corporation is planning, she must be feeling puzzled after hearing that 'Prepare Wedding'.

"Please don't mind, this is just a logistics problem."

The attendant reverts back to his original smile in order to hide the situation, but

no matter how I look that it, it's just too strange.

"Oi, wasn't your Japanese really fluent when you were talking on the phone?"

"O~ uu, Japanese is really tough, I don't know what you're saying~"

This guy really bugs me.

"Speaking of which, there's no need to prepare whatsoever wedding. Just let us go in and don't bother us."

Thanks to the phone call just now, I know what they're planning. However, I'm not planning on letting them do whatever they want. If not, my entire life will be...

"Don't say that, please like us handle this and prepare a super duper wedding for you~"

"No need."

"You must allow us no matter what."

"No."

"Please?"

"I refuse?"

"If you refuse, I'm going to send some rotten crayfish to your house!"

"NO! Our family will get food poisoning if that happens!"

My mum will definitely think that those are Ise shrimps. To actually make such a terrifying threat, this damned fake foreigner!

"Then, let's have a commemorative photo."

"...Commemorative photo?"

"Yes, this will be a super matching imprint of a couple's love~"

"...Yuuji and I...match each other (blushes)."

Shouko started to blush because of this fake foreigner's nonsense.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. I have the camera here."

At this moment, another worker's holding onto a camera with one hand as his cap is lowered.

Hm? I seem to have met this guy before. Isn't it too suspicious that he lowered his cap deliberately?

"You specially brought the camera here. Sorry to bother you, you've been a great help."

The fake foreigner thanked as he received the camera. That's really suspicious! They aren't convenience store workers, is there a need to be so polite to each other in a theme park?

—Hm, let me try this.

"Sorry, I'm going to make a call."

"Okay, please."

I pulled out my phone and call this huge idiot named 'Yoshii Akihisa' while not showing my number.

Prrrr Prrrr.

"Ah, sorry, my phone rang."

Once the phone rang, the butt pocket of the guy who brought the camera over rang.

Success!

"Yo~ Akihisa, you sure found it interesting, right?"

"You got the wrong person!"

Dash!

"Ah, damn it! You dare to run away? Let go of me, you fake foreigner!"

"He's one of our workers here, the name's Elizabeth Hanako (35 years old), also known as Steve. He's definitely not called Yoshii or something,"

"Shut up! You actually came up with such a ridiculous name and age without flinching! And no matter what, that sort of name can't possibly be called Steve! Speaking of which, I never called that guy by his surname Yoshii, right?"

Akihisa got away while I was held up by the fake foreigner.

That damned Itsuki's definitely trying to set me up...what is he treating my life as! Is he thinking about payback?

But isn't it too much to actually act as a worker here? This doesn't seem like Akihisa's working alone.

That old granny---let me repeat that again, the principal helped out as well, right? Since that damned old granny's indebted to him, she probably won't refuse.

No, not just the old granny, even the rest should be involved.

"Sorry Shouko, but just endure this for a while."

"?"

I reach my hand out to grab the stunned Shouko's skirt and lift it up slight—to the length where her underwear can be seen.

"...(Flash)!"

At that moment, from the corner of my eyes, I caught a figure reach his arms and clutch in front of his chest

—Anyway, it's just a guy who's wearing a fox costume.

"To reach his arms quickly in and clutch in front of his chest for a digital camera...even Muttsulini's here?"

After exchanging glances with me, that fox mascot immediately disappeared agilely like a rabbit.

Since Akihisa and Muttsulini are around, then Hideyoshi and and Himeji should be around somewhere. Really, these guys...why are they so tireless when it comes to other people's misfortune!

"...Yuuji, ecchi."

Just as I'm wondering how to punish them, I noticed that Shouko's staring at me rather angrily.

"What? You, you're mistaken! I'm not interested in your underwear at all!"

"...I'll be bothered if that's the case."

"GUUAAHHH!! THAT'S COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE!!!"

Shouko stretched her arm and grabbed my skull.I seem to hear my own bone cracking.

"Okay, it's now time to take the photo. Say cheese."

The light start to flash nearby, and then an electronic sound can be heard.

"We'll print it immediately, so please wait for us here."

"...I know, I'll be waiting for you in this position."

"GUUAHH!! IF YOU MAINTAIN THIS POSITION, MY SKULL WILL..."

Born with an ever honest personality, Shouko didn't even let go as she continues to wait in this position.

Does she really like me?

"It's done. Please take this."

After a short while, the fake foreigner came back with the photo, and I got released.

"...Thank you."

Shouko received the photo over happily.

"...Look, Yuuji, this is our memory."

Shouko said this as she brought the photo right in front of me, who's coughing now.

"What's with this photo!"

The image taken was actually the back of Shouko's head and me being executed painfully. Also—

"I added a special touch for you, you know."

私達、結婚します。
Thank you for
Celebrating
with us!

The special touch was adding a heart-shaped frame around our photo and adding the words, "We're about to get married".

Surrounding the woman who let out the claw of Heaven and the guy who was suffering because of it. To the unsuspecting folks, they should be wondering what happened between those two that cause them to end up in marriage...but no matter how I look at it, there can never be happiness between these two!

"Can I hang this up in our theme park photo room?"

"Are you still normal? What's the benefit of having such a photo as a decoration?"

Any customer who sees this will definitely retreat.

"...Are you embarrassed, Yuuji?"

"Sorry, but no matter how I look at this, this photo doesn't seem to warrant any need for me to be embarrassed."

Just as I was looking at this ridiculous photo and about to say this—

"Ahh! Someone's taking a photo! Let's get them to take a photo for us~"

"As a wedding commemoration photo of us? That's cool. Oi, you're a worker here, right? Help us take a photo!!"

The arrogant delinquent couple shouted as they head towards us.

"Sorry, but this couple is targeted by the corporation's plan..."

The fake foreigner refused. Seems like this photo is another scheme in the corporation's plan, and only we're entitled to it.

"What are you saying? Is there anything wrong with it? We're customers, you understand!?"

"Waa~ Ryouta's so cool~~"

The man glares angrily a the fake foreigner as he looks from below to top. Seems like this guy's really a delinquent. The woman's who's excited about this

guy's roguishness probably has a screw loose or something.

"And our photo should be more attractive compared to those old-fashioned brats, right?"

"That's right, compared to that dumb guy, my Ryouta's 100 times cooler than him!"

Never mind, I'll slip away while that delinquent couple's distracted.

"....(tatatatata)."

"Eh Oi, Shouko, where're you going?"

I grabbed Shouko's wrist just as she's angrily charing that the couple.

"...Those two just insulted Yuuji."

"I say, you... If we're to bother about this, we won't be able to end this."

We'll definitely not end up with something good if we're to clash with those guys. Besides, no matter what they say, I won't even care about it. Just seeing them is enough to irritate me.

"Let's go, Shouko."

"...Since Yuuji said so..."

Seems like Shouko doesn't want to see them as well, as she followed after I told her.

"Ahhh! If you continue to drag on like this, I'll report to the media that your customer service is atrocious, you hear me!?"

"That's right~ we're customers!!"

The delinquent couple behind us continue to shout.

The promotional event actually got such customers here. Kisaragi Highland's

really unlucky.

☆

"Okay then, let's go home after we walk around."

"...We must walk around happily."

Like what was advertised, the theme park has all sorts of the latest games, from the 3D-effects gaming equipment to the horrifying roller coast, coffee cups, carousels. There are even some attractions with things imagine even with the outer appearances.

"It'll be easier if there's a cinema somewhere here."

"...It's rare for us to come by, that won't do."

My proposal got rejected by Shouko. Though it's troublesome, I'm trying to find an attraction that won't make both sides awkward. At this moment, a mascot came to us while looking like it's going to fall. She seems similar to that fox mascot just now, except in a different outfit. And this one has a large butterfly knot on it, so it should be a female, right?

"Onii-chan, Phi Phi will introduce you to some interesting attractions!"

A youthful girl's voice can be heard from below the mascot, and it seems like it doesn't have a voice changer, since it seems like a normal person...or rather, this is a familiar voice. Am I thinking too much? Why do I feel that this sounds like a certain honor student from our class.

Seems like I have to check it out.

"Speaking of which, the female college student who's working part-time is dating Akihisa to a movie."

"Ehh, are you talking about Akihisa-kun? Where did you see that?"

These guys actually came here...

"Oi, Himeji! You're here to help?"

"Ah! You, you're mistaken! I—no, Phi Phi isn't called Himeji! As you can see, Phi Phi is a fox girl!"

To actually think of a way to force her way out of this, Himeji's a really serious person.

"Okay Phi Phi, then let's see you introduce the place."

"Ah? Oh, mm! Phi Phi recommends the haunted house directly opposite."

Himeji—no, Phi Phi stretched her hand out and points to a building on the other side of the fountain. Hm, so it's the famous haunted house that was built from an abandoned hospital?

"Really, thanks."

"No problems. Enjoy yourself."

"Oh, Shouko, let's go to 'some place other than the haunted house'."

I push Shouko from behind. The moment I said this, Himeji immediately pulled my wrist.

"Wai wai wai wai wait! Why are you not going to the recommended place!"

"You dare to ask me why! I can tell from you tone that there's some trap inside to make fun of me right? I'm not going to go on a suicide run."

No matter how good her grades is, Himeji really can't fool anyone. She immediately revealed their plan accidentally.

"I, I'll be really bothered! Please, please go there!"

"I refuse."

I don't want to sell my life away for just her request! I must refuse no matter what, I got a good freedom of youth ahead of me!

"Please~ you'll definitely find the ghost house interesting!"

"I, DON'T, WANT!"

I ignore Himeji, who's tugging at me. However, she continues to tug at me as I drag her. That's really troublesome. Just as I intend to shrug her away, something seems to be heading for us.

"End of the line, Yuuji—no, the ugly guy over there!"

"These dumb movements...is it Akihisa?"

Appearing in a dumb manner is the male mascot I just found. What the heck, a change of costumes?

"How rude! I—no, wait, since when is Noi Noi dumb?"

"Shut up! What's wrong with calling out an idiot who's wearing the mascot head the other way around!"

What's supposed to be a cute and cuddly doll now has its head turned backwards because of Akihisa, and now it's a bone-chilling creature.

"...Yuuji, Noi Noi's just a kid."

"Shouko, a creature that can put the head wrongly will be annihilated by society."

You'll die if you don't watch yourself. An existence like him can only exist at the bottom of the food chain.

"Ah, Akihisa-kun, your head's turned backwards! Ahh! The kids were crying once they saw you!"

"Wah, this isn't good! No wonder I can't see what's in front!"

"Hurry up and put the head properly, or Sakamoto-kun will find out!"

To think that you can actually fool me till now, these two are really a match for each other.

"Ah, sorry to keep you waiting."

An even more troublesome person is here—the fake foreigner from just now. To think that he actually caught up to us so quickly.

"Mr Sakamoto Yuuji, please head to the haunted house."

"Didn't I say that I don't want to!?"

I don't want to deliberately enter that dangerous place.

"If you refuse, I'll send a large amount of food to your house."

"Don't do that! If you do, my family's lives will be at risk!"

My mum won't even bother about what to do unless we finish up all the food. How can this guy be so vicious?

"Speaking of which, Akihisa-kun, who's the female university student who was with you? To think that you have the time to chase after other girls even during this important situation..."

"Eh? What are you talking about? I never—hm? Why are you taking you phone out? Who're you calling here?"

"I think Minami will be here soon. Before that, please explain clearly."

"No, no way! If there's a bloodshed incident on opening day, the ratings of this theme park will—GYYAH! I feel that someone's rushing at me angrily! I'll do anything, kneel, beg for forgiveness, just don't kill me!!"

The two fantasy creatures are having a couple's quarrel. What an unbelievable scene.

"Miss Sakamoto Shouko, you may hug your boyfriend when you enter the haunted house in any way that you want."

"...Yuuji, I want to go."

"You're really despicable. Actually thinking of using Shouko to force me into the trap! And who asked you to randomly change Shouko's surname! Her surname's Kirishima!"

"...Don't worry, it'll become Sakamoto soon."

Without noticing it, Shouko again controls my arm. If so, I can't resist!

"Okay, then please sign here."

The fake foreigner pulls out a document and a pen. What's this?

"Just an ordinary consent form."

We're just entering a haunted house. Is there really a need to sign a consent form? Is it really that dangerous inside?

"Seems interesting."

Since there's a consent form, it should mean that there's something that's really scary inside. Maybe it's really interesting.

I'm starting to feel a little interested as I get ready to sign that consent form with the ball-point pen.

'Consent form'

1. I—Sakamoto Yuuji swear to take Kirishima Shouko as my wife, through thick and thin, loving each other for the rest of our lives. 2. I swear that we will get married at Kisaragi Highlands. 3. No matter what happens, I will never leave Kirishima Shouko.

"...Here, Yuuji, here's the seal."

"The inkpad's here."

"Am I the only one? Am I the only one who finds this completely ridiculous!?"

These guys are crazy!

"That's a joke. There's no need to sign this, you can just go in."

"...mn, just joking."

"You guys prepared the carbon papers, and you actually dare say that you're joking!"

I really have a lot of things to say, but isn't their common sense too cruel or something?

"It'll be rather inconvenient to bring that huge bag around. I'll keep it for you."

"...Sorry to bother you."

Shouko hands her bag over to the fake foreigner. Speaking of which, her bag's really huge.

"...The contents inside may spillover, so please don't put it horizontally."

"You're talking about this bag? I understand, please don't worry."

Spill out? What's inside that bag?

"Then enjoy to you heart's content."

"...Let's go, Yuuji."

"OWOWOWOWOW! MY ARM'S GOING TO GET TWISTED BY YOU!"

My resistance ends up useless, and after a while, I got dragged by her to the entrance of the haunted house. Did they deliberately try to create the atmosphere? The haunted house has automatic sliding doors, but there's not a single light inside. It feels like someone's making some moves.

"It's me. The prey has already entered the haunted house. We'll start with the plan that Mr Yoshii came up with."

Before the auto-door closed, I could hear the fake foreigner say that.

So Akihisa came up with the plan? I don't know what's going on, but I won't let that guy get what he wants!

Shouko and I continue to walk down this dark corridor. Kk, kk...the the footsteps on the linoleum's a lot clearer than what I expected.

"As expected of a haunted house that's modified from an abandoned hospital, this sure is rare."

"...It's a bit scary."

"It's really rare for you to be afraid even though there's nothing."

"...Maybe."

We continue to move on in the directions mapped out by the sign 'move forward'.

There's nothing on the 1st level, and so we head upstairs. Before we can take a few steps, there finally seems to be something going on.

"—fer—ji—"

With a heart chilling wind, a distorted voice can be heard.

Hm? Is this a cry of agony?

"...Is this voice...Yuuji?"

"Hm? Is that so?"

The voice does sound similar to mine. Most likely, Hideyoshi's imitating my voice.

To hear my own voice without me even speaking, it does feel scary. I thought that Akihisa's plan will be rather simple or something—

"I prefer Himeji to Shouko, and her breasts are bigger."

"...Yuuji, are you ready?"

"Scary! Shouko's face actually became like a Hannya! That's super thrilling!"

How did that damned Akihisa think of such a terrifying method! Is he planning of not letting me escape here alive!?

Just as I'm getting worried, I suddenly hear some sort of mechanism being activated.

Great! Well done! I can protect my own life now.

"Ah, Shouko! Something seemed to have appeared!"

Turning to where the sound came from, something appeared at the originally empty place . That is—

"...How kind of them."

—A mace?

That damned Akihisa! He actually prepared everything! Though they messed up on how it's supposed to be scary, this is one super duper scary haunted house!

"...Yuuji, where are you going to escape to?"

Wielding the mace, my childhood friend came pursuing after me in this new method of playing, and I got chased for an entire hour.

However, does Akihisa really think that this will bring Shouko and me together?

☆

I continued to escape as I tried to explain to Shouko that Hideyoshi was mimicking my voice, and finally managed to calm her down and bring her out from the house.

"It's been tough on you! How about that? Do you two feel like getting married?"

"Only you and that idiot Akihisa will think this will make us get married..."

Forget about creating a gap between us, I'm feeling that the divide between me and Shouko just got wider.

"That's strange? I though those couples who pass through adversity together won't have such a problem with each other..."

"Well, ya, it would have been possible if the crisis didn't come from the ones who should be together..."

This fake foreigner's brain shouldn't be any different from Akihisa, right?

But now at least I can relax a bit. If it's a plan Akihisa came up with, there wouldn't be any delinquents coming up to threaten or extort me. If so, I don't have to keep thinking of ways to escape...how troublesome. If possible, I really want to go home now.

"...About time to eat lunch."

Shouko stares above the fountain as she mutters. The large clock that's in that direction indicates that it's 1pm. That's right, it's about time to eat.

"...That, my bag--"

"Yes, we prepared a deluxe meal for both guests. Please follow me."

The fake foreigner walks away after saying this.

They actually prepared lunch for us. That entrance ticket sure isn't for show.

"What's wrong, Shouko?"

"...Nothing."

"?"

What's with that lonely look on her face out of a sudden?

"...Yuuji, if we don't hurry up, we won't be able to catch up with him." "Hm, you're right."

Maybe believing that we will follow him, the fake foreigner has already walked quite some distance. Well, since he said that they prepared a meal for us, we'll let him treat us.

I hurriedly walk away, and after a walk, what appears in front of me is a trendy-looking restaurant.

"Please enjoy the meal that we'll be preparing for you here."

Immediately, the fake foreigner ushered us into a wide hall that seems like a party hall.

There's a round table right in the middle, and there is also a stage and some small tables. The atmosphere now doesn't look like a restaurant, but like a—

"...A quiz show?"

That's right, though there's a lot of luxurious food on the table, this is basically a quiz show that we always see on TV.

"Mr Sakamoto Yuuji and Miss Shouko, welcome."

Am attendant walks over as he leads us to our seats—what the heck, I know this guy too!

"Why are you dressed up as an attendant, Hideyoshi?"

"Hideyoshi? What are you talking about?"

My classmate shows a poker face. Has this guy gotten into character? Seems like it's hard to rip this guy's mask off.

I'll just use the useful tool that I used on Akihisa!

"Since you deny it, I'll just confirm it."

I pull out my phone and look for a name in the phonebook called 'Kinoshita Hideyoshi'. But before I could press the call button, the attendant beside me immediately took action.

"Ah, my phone slip!"

Hideyoshi (?) pulls out his phone and threw it hard at the fountain. Ploop, the sound of something landing in the water can be heard.

"Is, is there a need to go to such an extent? Your phone will definitely spoil!"

"I don't understand what you're saying."

Hideyoshi continues to give me the poker face.

Even if he doesn't really use it, to throw the handphone away without a second thought....the enemy's thoroughly into character.

"Then, if you allow me, please."

"Ah, ooh..."

We're led by the attendant to the center of the hall.

"As the two guests are underaged, we've prepared these drinks for you."

After we sat down, the attendant pours some non-alcoholic champagne into our glasses, not even forgetting to introduce us the brand of this champagne. He's really into it, as expected of someone from the drama society.

"Please enjoy your appetiser."

After putting down the glasses the dishes are served onto this table. Seeing the luxurious food that's only the appetiser, I can only grimace that I'm not used to holding a fork and a knife.

Speaking of which, Shouko should be rather used to this sort of cuisine, right?

Until we finished eating, there doesn't seem to be any traps around. Just as I thought that I can heave a sigh of relief—

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for attending this trial trip of Kisaragi Highlands's before it officially opens!"

A loud voice booms throughout the entire hall. "Actually, in this hall today, there will be a wedding experience event to prepare a high school couple!"

Some of the drink I just gulped down accidentally sputtered out of the nose.

"We at Kisaragi Corporation wish to encourage this couple and created such a scheme! The scheme is called the 'Kisaragi Highlands wedding experience' quiz show~"

A heavy sound of the entrance being locked can be heard from the entrance. To actually cut off my escape route, damn you Akihisa! Seems like you have grasped how I would think!

"The content of this scheme is simple. You just need to answer all the 5 provided questions to enjoy the wedding of the highest class! Of course, if you wish, there's no problems with directly registering as a couple."

That's a huge problem, you big idiot.

"Then Mr Sakamoto Yuuji and Miss Shouko, please stand on the stage in front!"

As the host earnestly pointed in our direction, everyone in the restaurant turned around to look at us.

"...A wedding experience...I'll do my best!"

"Calm down Shouko. A wedding has to be agreed by both sides—
OWWWWW!!! MY EARS ARE ABOUT TO BE RIPPED OFF! I'LL GO! I'LL GO! JUST LET ME GO!"

I continue to keep telling myself that this is just an experience, but I still feel unhappy as I step on on the stage.

With the workers leading us, Shouko and I are assigned to our seats.

"Okay, the 'Kisaragi Highlands wedding experience' quiz show begins now!"

There's a huge button between Shouko and me, and it seems like a standard answering system where we have to press the button before answering.

Well...if I get the answer correct, I'll get a prize, but if I answer a few questions wrongly, this event will be a bust, right? Seems like I'll just have to keep answering wrongly.

"And the first question is up!"

I reach my hand out for the button as I wait for the question.

Come on, show me what questions you have...

"When is Mr Sakamoto Yuuji and Miss Shouko's wedding anniversary?"

That's too strange! I don't even understand what this question is about!?

—Ding dong!

Damn it! Before I even noticed, Shouko actually pressed the button. But even if it's Shouko, she can't possibly answer a question that has a non-existent answer —

"Alright, let's have Miss Shouko with the answer!"

"...Everyday's our wedding anniversary."

"DON'T SAY IT SHOUKO! I'LL BANG MY HEAD AGAINST THE WALL OUT OF EMBARRASSMENT!!"

"Brillant! That's the correct answer!"

That's the correct answer!?

I glare at the host; he actually glanced at me from an angle where the audience can't see him. What the heck! So this was pre-planned! Do you really want us to have a wedding experience?

Find then, if so—I'll show you my passion!

"Second question! Where will the wedding be held?"

—Ding dong!

I quickly pressed the button down as I lean near the mic to say the correct answer. These questions aren't questions now, they're just interrogations. But it doesn't matter. If I give a wrong answer, that's nothing!

"Okay, will Mr Sakamoto Yuuji please answer!"

"Miso-stewed Mackerel!"

"Correct answer!"

"What?"

How can such a thing happen! You asked for the location, so how can my miso-stewed mackerel answer be correct!?

"The wedding of these two will be held at the phoenix room our Kisaragi hotel, also known as the 'Miso-stewed Mackerel'.

"Hold on! You just came up with this nickname, right!? There has to be a limit to this!"

"Third question! Where did the couple first meet?"

No way, they aren't listening to me...but if so, I can guess what they're thinking. I have to say the wrong answer this time. Got to be faster than Shouko and say the wrong answer—

"...Don't you think of doing that."

—Pwoosh.

"OOOOWWWWW!!! MY EYESS! MMMYYY EEEEEYYYYEEEEESSSS!!!"

—Ding dong.

"Okay, will Miss Shouko answer?"

"...Elementary school."

"Correct answer! These two first met each other in elementary school, and after a long time of dating, they're finally about to be married today! Just an intimate

pair of childhood friends!"

Didn't he just see my eyes getting poked hard? Since when has our relationship reached such an extent that it can be considered intimate!?

It's too late to answer the question after hearing it, so I have to get the right to answer before Shouko does. If so—

"Next, the fourth question!"

—Ding dong!

Before the host could say the answer, I already pressed the button. Now I can give an answer before being stopped! Though I don't know the question, I'll be 100% correct if I just answer 'I don't know'.

"I don't—"

"Correct answer! Up next, the last question!" WOAH! He just ignored my answer! Did he give this reply because I ignored the question? I can't even answer a question wrongly now. Just as I'm thinking about giving up—

"Oi~ is there something wrong? We're also about to get married, why is it that only that high school couple can have such special treatment~"

The savior with the irritating tone has arrived.

Just as everyone start to look around for that guy who spoke, he walked up to the stage without anyone asking him to.

"Dear guests, we're having an event not. Sorry, but can you—"

"AHH? STOP YAPPING OVER THERE! WE'RE GUESTS, YOU UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION!?"

The coffee-haired guy with piercings threatened the workers.

I actually wanted to mention that those two look familiar. So they're actually the

delinquent couple that continued to pester the fake foreigner when we first entered.

"We have a wedding experience as well~"

"Bu, but, this—"

"DIDN'T WE TELL YOU TO STOP YAPPING ABOUT? WE WANT TO ENTER THE QUIZ SHOW. ARE YOU DUMB OR DID YOU NOT HEAR US!?"

"YEAH! HOW ABOUT THAT! WE'LL COME UP WITH THE QUESTION. IF THEY ANSWER IT CORRECTLY, THEY WIN. IF WE ANSWER IT WRONGLY, WE WIN!"

"How, how can it be—"

Ignoring the panicking workers, the delinquent couple stride onto the stage and grab a mic.

Once in a million chance! That host will definitely ignore my answer, but if it's these duo, I may have a chance to escape.

Next, I just need to prevent Shouko from answer...

"...Yu, Yuuji?"

I held Shouko's hand as I put my hand on the contestant's table. If so, she can't poke her fingers into my eye. Now all I need to do is just to give them a wrong answer, and everything will be OK!

"Okay, here's the question."

The hoodlum deliberately rolls his tongue and says in a tone that's hard to hear out.

Come on, what's the question? Relax, no matter how simple the question is, I can answer it wrongly—

"WHAT'S THE CAPITAL OF EUROPE?"

"..."

I can't even answer this.

"Oi, hurry up and answer! Don't you know?"

I really don't know what's the answer. In my memory, Europe was never designated as a 'country'. It's impossible to answer this question at all.

"...Mr Sakamoto Yuuji and Miss Shouko, congratulations on winning the 'Kisaragi Highlands' wedding experience' prize!"

"OI, hold up! These two haven't answered at all! We should be the winners, right?"

"How is that possible? Is that host an idiot!?"

As the idiotic couple continue to create a ruckus, the stage ended.

To think that there's a bigger idiot than Akihisa in this world...this world sure is huge.

☆

"Congratulations to you two to be able to win this free wedding experience. You two are lucky."

"...I'm so happy."

Once we walked out the restaurant, the fake foreigner immediately carries Shouko's bag as he walks towards us. Really, what lucky? You guys planned this right from the beginning.

"Oh yeah, Shouko, what's in your bag? Why is it so big?"

"...No, it's nothing..."

Shouko's reply seems to be a little troubled. What's going on?

However, this person here is someone who'll bring my important stamp around, so it's not strange to see her bring such a large bag.

"Miss Shouko, for the wedding experience, can you please follow this worker and get ready?"

A 30+ woman walks up to us from behind the fake foreigner and bows to us. She looks just like a professional who specializes in dressing up wedding gowns on others.

"Hello, we've met for the first time. I'll be in charge of putting the wedding gown on this Miss here. For this event to be an unforgettable success, please allow me to help you dress up as the prettiest bride."

The female worker smiles earnestly at Shouko.

Oi oi oi, aren't you playing it too seriously? You even got a specialist to come all the way here?

If so, Kisaragi Highlands wasn't planning to promote their facilities right from the start, but the wedding experience we're going to have? Seems like my time is wasted on this mock wedding.

"If so, don't I have to wait for quite some time?"

"Please rest assured, as for Mr Sakamoto Yuuji, we've already heard from Mr Yoshii—no, that's not right, we've already thought of the best way to deal with you."

"There's no need to hide it now. Did Akihisa give you any instructions?"

I suddenly have a bad feeling about this.

"Yes, he said to use this on Mr Sakamoto Yuuji first."

While saying this, he pulls out something that looks like a taser (200,000 volts).

"Because Mr Sakamoto Yuuji may think of escaping, Mr Yoshii's instruction is to use this taser to knock you out and then change you into the bridegroom's outfit."

"A,
AAAAAKKKKKKIIIIHHHHHIIIIIIISSSSSSSSAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!

"Please endure this for a while."

Before I can hear the terrifying bzzt sound from behind, I got knocked out just like that.

☆

"And now, we'll have the main event of today, the wedding experience! Will all guests please applaud the bridegroom!"

The loud applause seems like it covers the entire theme park. I thought that these guests were air to come here, but even the ordinary guests can't help but applaud on hearing this.

"Mr Sakamoto Yuuji, please stand on the stage."

The fake foreigner who's standing on the stage whispered to me.

How about I try to beat this guy down and immediately run away?

"If you still want to resist, I'll put sea urchins and brown brushes together as a sashimi plate and send it over to you house." Uu! If that's sent to my house, my mum will think that they're all sea urchins and eat the brown brushes together...

"Really can't stand you...oh well, at least that's just an experience. I'll just play along..."

In order to let the fake foreigner relax, I deliberately said these words of giving up struggling in a voice loud enough for him to hear.

These guys must be planning to go all the way from exchanging rings to the oath and the kiss. They probably want to use this entire sequence to spread it out to the public and force Shouko and me to get married. But if society's to see this and find me with another girl, I'll get talked about. Frustrating, but a skillful way of forcing us to get married. To come up with such a plan—though they haven't considered the problem of misusing the image rights, the enemy's a famous enterprise, so they will have a way.

If so, I'll just have to escape before the oath is said, and best if everyone can see it. Maybe I can feign illness...they can only end this if they can't handle me. As long as I get away from here, it doesn't matter what happens later.

"Mr Sakamoto Yuuji, please head up the stage."

"Okay okay."

Dong dong dong, I climb up the slightly steep steps. When I got onto the stage, the scene in front of me makes me somewhat dizzy.

"Oi, that can't be it...what's with this setup!?"

What appeared in front of me are numerous lights and a full audience like a concert. Everything, the dry ice equipment, the balls and smoke are all set up. And there're all sorts of lighting experts around.

"And now, a brief introduction of the bridegroom's life—"

Oh? Introducing my life? That's not too different from a real wedding. Seems like even with the final goal in mind, they got every minor detail in place as well. The quiz show just now was the same as well. Seems like they got lots of details from Akihisa—

"—we'll ignore that."

That's too shoddy!

"Haiz! No need to introduce him in the first place."

"We have no interest in that in the first place~"

"We just need to know that there are people who aren't worthy of being at our wedding place."

"That's right~"

The jerks sitting in front create such a ruckus.

The voices...so it's that delinquent couple in the quiz show just now.

They're in the front row, yet they continue to yap away like nobody's business. These two's etiquette are as lousy as their looks.

"...In order to avoid creating disturbance to the other guests, will those below the stage, please avoid creating a huge commotion."

"Were they just talking about us?"

"No way, we're guests!"

"You're right~"

"Humph, even if they're talking about us, we have no need to be mindful about that. The main thing is that we're not satisfied. Isn't that right, isn't that more important?"

"That's right, that's right! Well said, Ryouta!"

The self-centered couple continues to increase their volume without any restraint.

The organizers should be really wishing that they can get rid of these meddlesome people, but these jerks that are making such a ruckus are tougher

for them to handle. Since this is a promotional event, there'll be no point to this is there's negative feedback, so they can only leave those two alone.

"And now, the bride will be here."

The BGM got deliberately louder as it reaches my ears, and all the lights are switched off. A light smoke rises from the feet, and it can't be denied that there's a wedding atmosphere here.

—Haha, it'll be depressing if Shouko's wearing a wedding gown that doesn't suit her!

I'll run away later. Since it's like this now, it'll be interesting to see Shouko in a wedding gown.

After making this decision, I decide to stay here. Before my eyes got used to the darkness, the spotlight lights up.

"Please welcome our female lead in this event, Miss Kirishima Shouko!"

With the audio broadcast, several lights are lit up as they all gather at a part of the stage. The darkness got instantly replaced by the light, forcing people to close their eyes.

When I try to open my eyes, I see the figure—and is rendered speechless.

Seems like I've just met the childhood friend that I've known since young in quite a while—seeing her like this, I start to feel a little delusional.

She looks just like a real bride, standing elegantly over there. Who...is she?

"...So pretty."

A voice can be heard from the silent crowd that's utterly awestruck. I don't know who said that, but those words reached my ears without any deterrence.

Maybe it's because it was delicately made that the pure white gown doesn't have a single crumple. The length of the skirt seems to nearly reach the floor, as it didn't get stained while she was walking.

"...Yuuji..."

The face hidden under the wedding gown, my childhood friend, dressed in a silk dress seems to look uncomfortable as she looks up. The bouquet of flowers in her hands at chest level sways about slightly.

"Are you, Shouko...?"

"...Nn."

My mind is utterly blank, and the question just came out even though I didn't need to answer that. Maybe the change was so drastic that I had to confirm it.

Seeing me waver, Shouko asks in a somewhat shyly manner,

"...How is it...do, I look like a bride...?"

Maybe it's because this girl looks like a stranger, or maybe it's the atmosphere, or maybe it's some other reason,; I just answered without thinking,

"—Um, no problems. At least no matter what, you don't look like a bridegroom."

The fleeting thought of 'it'll be depressing if Shouko's wearing a wedding gown that doesn't suit her' got thrown far away. 'You don't look like a bridegroom'—I guess it's a good job that I managed to at least say something.

"...Yuuji..."

Shouko called my name softly as she hugs the bouquet of flowers into her arms.

And then, she seems to be stunned as she remains rooted to the spot.

"Oi, oi, Shouko...?"

What's wrong? She seems weird, was my answer weird?

Should I get over to her? I hesitate for a while. Just when I'm doing so, Shouko

again says,

"...I'm so happy..."

The girl in front of me lowers her head and buries her face into the flowers.

She can no longer say anything more as she can only tremble silently.

"What, what's going on? The bride seems to be crying?"

As if remembering his own job, the audio broadcast can be heard again.

Is she about to cry? I only noticed it when the host said it. Lowering her head, her shoulders trembling—Shouko's crying silently in front of me.

"Oi, Shouko, what's..."

The veil and the bouquet of flowers prevents me from seeing her face clearly. Why is she crying?

The originally silent audience starts to chatter loudly for some reason, and yet Shouko's able to say to me in an audible voice,

"...Because...this has always been my dream..."

A hoarse voice reaches my ears.

"A dream, huh?"

"...Ever since I was little, I always dreamed of being Yuuji's bride...always had this dream ...of having a wedding that belongs only to Yuuji and me...but, I can't possibly do it on my own, this dream of mine..."

The normally silent Shouko tries her best to say out some words, creating a weird feeling within me.

Because 'that incident' when we were young caused her to harbor affections only

for me. The affections were merely supposed to be out of guilt and responsibility —but why must this person here remain so steadfast in her beliefs.

"...So...I'm really happy...to be able to do this, not with anybody else, but with Yuuji..."

Saying all the way till her, Shouko can no longer talk further as she weeps silently.

At this moment, the sound of someone blowing the nose can be heard. Is the audience touched to tears? Some people's tear glands are really weak.

"So she's actually crying out of happiness! Our bride here is still as focused as ever. How will the groom react to the bride's confession?"

How should I respond? Do I need to say it? No matter the time or place, what I should do is to correct this person's incorrect thinking.

Thinking about this—unbelievably, I can't even utter a single word.

"Shouko, I—"

"Ah~ ah~ so boring~"

Just as I was about to finally say something, a loud voice can be heard from the audience. I immediately shut my mouth. Even though I don't know what's going on, maybe I got all dizzy or something. Maybe I can say that it was god's grace to prevent me from saying something.

"Such a boring event~ forget about those boring things, can't we have a performance or something~?"

"That's right~ we have no interest in listening to your love story."

Seems like the people who saved me were those two idiots. Their voices can be

heard amongst the now silent crowd.

"Speaking of which, what 'being a bride was what I always wanted? Or what? Are you acting pure? Is this what the workers here to you to say? How idiotic is that? It's so disgusting it makes me sick!"

"Are you playing a pure love game? We don't want to waster our precious time on you people~ does that woman have a problem? I find it comical no matter how I hear it~"

"I know! That was a comedy just now right? That's right, where will there be anyone in this world with such a disgusting dream!?"

"Eh~ was that a comedy? It's really comical~"

Those two continue to mock Shouko one after another, but—

"WHAT DID YOU SAY!? SAY THAT AGAIN IF YOU DARE!!"

"AH, AKIHISA-KUN, PLEASE CALM DOWN! YOU'LL RUIN THIS EVENT IF YOU GET SO WORKED UP!"

The angry roar could be heard through the broadcast, and the sounds of violence can be heard from behind the stage. Seems like a certain idiot can't control his anger after hearing those words.

Where is he throwing his tantrum from? I turn my eyes from the couple below the stage to look behind.

But even though I took only a short glance—

"Wh-where's the bride? Where did the bride go?"

Shouko disappeared from the stage. What's left at the place where she was standing are a small bouquet of flowers and a wedding veil.

"..Sigh, really can't stand her."

I picked up the veil that she threw onto the floor.

The veil that was supposedly as light as a feather now seems a lot heavier after being stained by Shouko's tears.

"Kirishima-san? Kirishima Shouko-san? Dear guests, please help us find the bride!"

The workers are now as anxious as ants on hot water.

Hm, seems like they have to end this wedding experience event. Now that the event they put so much effort in can only end as failure, those thick-skinned people at Kisaragi Highlands are definitely going pale.

"Mr, Mr Sakamoto! Please help us find the bride!"

One of the workers in the hall pants as he runs towards me, probably trying to ask me where that person ran off to.

"Sorry, I'll pass. It's troublesome, and I really want to go to the toilet."

"Eh? Wa-wait a minute Mr Sakamoto!"

I turn around and leave while still hearing the cries of that worker, and he can only give up reluctantly after seeing me being unwilling to help. Really, if you have the time to ask me, how about you just search for yourself? That'll be faster right?

I get into the prepared crowd as I leave the hall. 5 minutes later, I found my target. Good thing they haven't gone too far off.

"Oh my, that was sooo funny~"

"Yeah, I always...dreamed of marrying you—how was it? Does it look like it? Is it cute?"

"Ahh, that was so like it. But—of course it's disgusting! Who will find it cute!?"

"Ya~"

Finally found them. Let's just settle this once and for all.

I slowly walk towards those two and said as I arrive behind them.

"Oi, you two."

"Ahhh, what is it!?"

The coffee-colored faces of the two jerks turn to face me.

Those two are the ones who helped me and prevented me from falling into a human life grave. I really have to thank them.

"Ryouta, isn't this guy the one who acted as the groom?"

"Seems like it. WHAT DO YOU FAUX-GROOM WANT US FOR, SAY IT!"

The guy walked forward as he threatens me.

"Oh well, nothing much actually—"

I take off my western coat that I borrowed and loosen my tie. Unbelievable, my body's already so hot even without me doing any warm-ups.

"—Let's just have a few words."

☆

"Yo, you kept me waiting for quite a while."

"...Yuuji."

Standing in front of a hotel in Kisaragi Highlands, Shouko finally exits the

passageway as she keeps her head down.

"Okay, time to go back."

I help Shouko carry the large bag that she took back from the fake foreigner as we walk slowly towards the train station.

"..."

Shouko doesn't say anything at all as she silently follows me.

We silently walk down the path to the train station in this sunset.

I don't know how long we walked, but while we're walking that's pretty empty, Shouko finally asks softly,

"...Yuuji."

"...What is it?"

"...Is my dream..weird?"

She must be bothered by the idiotic couple's mockery.

Shouko stopped, and though her head's lowered to prevent me from seeing her face, I can tell what her expression is.

"This, well, maybe it isn't ordinary."

I chose my words carefully before making this reply.

"..."

Shouko again remains silent.

The reason why I answered like this is because in these not-so-short 7 years; she always harbored this one unshakeable dream as she stuck onto me. But now that her dream got mocked and denied in front of so many people, I can't even imagine how she feels.

But even so, I don't intend to lie just to comfort her.

"I'll use this chance to state this clearly, your feelings towards me are just derived from that past guilt you had."

The event that happened 7 years ago was the key reason why Shouko thinks that she fell for me. Up till now, I'm still regretful of that incident. If I had handled it a little better, maybe it wouldn't have ended up like this.

Because of that, that person wasted her time on this useless bum here.

Thus, I have a need to tell her directly 'you're mistaken'—in order to prevent her from wasting time on such a thing.

"...Yuuji..."

Shouko gasped. Maybe this is a blow to her when I said this.

"But—"

But I have no need to hurt her. What's wrong is how this person here understands her feelings, but being able to harbor such feelings for just one person for this long is something she should be proud of.

So I have to tell her this. She isn't completely wrong, she just made a mistake in her target. However, her dream isn't wrong, and it's not strange at all.

"—But then, I won't laugh at your dream. Your dream is amazing, it won't lose to anyone, so you have to be confident of yourself."

I put the thing that I picked up at the hall on Shouko, who has her head down.

"However, you cannot mistake who you're going for."

To have a wedding experience, it shouldn't be bad to have a memory like this, right?

"...This is...the headdress from...just now..."

Shouko reaches her hands out and receives the pure white headdress of the wedding gown as she lifts head head and stares at me in shock.

Seeing her so shocked, I suddenly feel somewhat awkward as I turn my head

away.

Ah, now that I mentioned it, I have something else I have to tell her no matter what.

"Also, Shouko—"

I stare at the fading sunset and say softly—

"—The bento was delicious."

I put the already lighter bag onto Shouko's hands.

"...Ah...my bento. Yuuji, you...notice...?"

"Okay, let's hurry up and head back. We'll be misunderstood if we stay out for far too long."

"...Yuuji."

"Especially my mom, no matter how I explain it—"

"Yuuji!"

It's been a while since I heard her speak so loudly, and I inadvertently stopped.

"What is it?"

I replied her call with my usual calm attitude.

Just as I tilt my head to face her, in the orange sunset, I see someone raising the headdress—

"I didn't make a mistake after all!"

I see — my childhood friend was smiling brightly at me.

☆

"Yo, Akihisa."

"Hm? Morning Yuuji, what's up?"

"You did quite a number to me at Kisaragi Highlands, huh?"

"Hahaha, what are you talking about? I was playing computer games at home the entire day, how can I possibly go to Kisaragi Highlands?"

"...Really? Well, you can act dumb all you want."

"Wh, what are you saying? That's so weird~"

"Oh yeah, I got a present for you."

"Eh? What is it?"

"This is a two-persons ticket to a highly-rated love story movie that's being aired right now. IF YOU HAVE 'SOMEONE YOU LIKE', JUST BRING HER OUT."

I deliberately increase my volume for everyone in the classroom to hear.

"A two-persons ticket? Uu—even if you give me this, I don't really know who to ask."

"So be it then."

I stuff the ticket into Akihisa's hand and turns to walk away.

"Ah, Aki! I want to watch a movie this weekend~"

"Ah, Akihisa-kun! I just so happened to have a movie that I want to watch!"

"Eh? What's going on? Why do you two have such killing intent? I just want to pawn this ticket away for my daily funds—OWWWWW! THEY'RE ABOUT TO BE PULLED OUT! SEVERAL IMPORTANT PARTS OF MY BODY ARE

GOING TO BE PULLED OUT BY YOU!!!"

The expected cries of anguish and pain can be heard from behind.

Really...who asked you to pull such a twisted plan in the first place, you big idiot.

Tsuchiya and Kudou's Mini Sex Life Story

"...Tsuchiya and—"

KOUTA TSUCHIYA

"—Kudou's..."

""Mini sex life story!""

"Yes. In this chapter, we'll be discussing some pervy stories of everyday life. This will be brought to you by me, Kudou Aiko, and Muttsu—"

"...Tsuchiya Kouta."

"—And Muttsulini!"

"...Nowadays, nobody's calling me by my real name..."

"And now, today's topic is—"

"...Real name..."

"—'The correct way to bathe'!"

"...uu! (phoosh)"

"Ehh? Nosebleeding so soon? Muttsulini-san, your imagination's way too creative, isn't it?"

"...Don't mind me, keep talking."

"O, okay. Well, since it's supposed to be a pervy story, I want to share my own experience. Actually a few days ago, just as I got ready to go home, it unexpectedly started raining."

"...Uuu (drip drip)."

"That day was really unlucky for me. I got too excited in playing during my club activities and my change of clothes dropped into the pool, so my underwear's all wet now."

AIKO KUDOU

"...UUUU (BBBBBZZZZZTTTT!!!)"

"At least for the bottom, I can still endure and wear it for 1 day, but the top—wah, Muttsulini-san? You seem to have nosebled 2 liters? Are you really alright?"

"...Don't mind me, keep talking!"

"And, and then, the rain cause my blouse to be drenched..."

"...UUUUUU (PAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPA!!!!!!!)"

"This plan can't possibly work! I haven't even talked about the part regarding bathing, and my partner already nosebled a mess!"

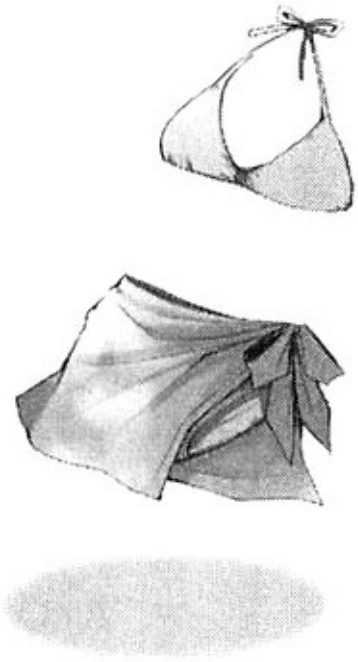
"...Even if I die, my soul will continue to listen."

"How can such a thing happen? Anyway, that's all for today! See you next time, everyone! Take care of your body!"

"...I'm really interested in the continuation."

"Before that, hurry up and go to the infirmary!"

Me and the Pool and the Swimsuit Wonderland



僕とプールと
水着の楽園
島田

After the event last weekend 'Yuuji and Kirishima-san's wedding plan' ended safely, it's another weekend night. My bad friend Yuuji came over to my house to play and stay overnight at my house.

"Eh? What did you buy, Yuuji?"

"Of course it's food. You don't have anything to eat here."

Yuuji said as he puts the plastic bag in his hand down onto the table.

"Heh~you're rather thoughtful to actually think of bringing a gift over."

I open the plastic bag, and there's a lot of food and drinks inside.

-Cola

-Iced coffee

-Cup noodles

-Instant fried noodles packet

There are two servings of food and drinks. I'm so grateful for that.

"Oh yeah, what will you take, Yuuji?"

I asked Yuuji, who's taking his coat off.

As for what to choose, of course, I'm talking about food and drinks. I'm OK with cola or coffee, and I'm also fine with eating instant or fried noodles. Actually, I'm happy just to eat anything. But since Yuuji bought these things, I should let him choose.

"Me? Well, I'll take..."

Yuuji should be taking the fried noodels and cola, right? Even if I don't ask, I can guess what this guy likes to eat.

"--The cola and the coffee and the instant noodles and the fried noodles."

"YUUJI YOU BASTARD! YOU'RE JUST LETTING ME EAT THE DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS!?"

"HOLD ON A MINUTE, YOU'LL EVEN EAT THE DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS? YOU JUST SHOCKED ME THERE!!"

Yuuji immediately stopped me.

"Besides, if I don't have any disposable chopsticks, don't I have to eat with my bare hands?"

It's really hard to imagine Yuuji eating instant noodles with his thumb and index fingers while shouting 'HOT, HOT!'.

"Forget about getting my chopsticks, I got your share as well."

"Eh? Really?"

"Yeah. Don't you see the other bag over there? The food inside is for you."

Now that he said that, I just noticed it. I didn't notice because the first bag was blocking, but on a closer look, there is another bag there.

"What, so you actually prepared my share."

"Ya, because I caused you to spend so much effort last week, so this is just a little token of appreciation."

"Hmm, now that you mentioned it, my hard work has somewhat paid off."

I pick up the bag that's pressed because and open it, there's food and drinks inside as well.

'Fruit jelly'

'Diet coke'

'Jelly'

"MY PRECIOUS CALORIESSSSSS!!!"

Seeing the food that don't contain any calories, I couldn't help but cry.

"Don't worry, this is just my little token of appreciation."

"DAMN IT, YOU NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THANKING ME, RIGHT? DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I WENT THROUGH JUST TO PREPARE THAT PLAN OF YOURS!?"

I pull my diet coke out and get ready to fire.

"YOU'RE TOO NOISY! WHAT ABOUT YOU, DON'T YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HAD TO SUFFER AFTER THAT!?"

Yuuji reaches into his plastic bag and pulls out his can of coke.

The evil atmosphere flows between us.

"...So Yuuji, you're ready to go at it?"

"Ya, besides, I think there's a need to have a showdown between us."

"Just what I want. I'll make you regret doing such a stupid thing as to challenge me!"

"Ha! You're all talk!"

We glare at each other as we get ready to move. The opponent's Yuuji, I'll die if I'm not careful.

In an instantaneous moment, the sound of water droplets dripping can be heard throughout the kitchen.

--Drip.

"--UU!"

With the drip of water as the signal, the situation went from a silent stare down contest to a fierce battle. Both of us took action at the same time. If so, the winner will be decided on the next action--

PAAAZZZZZZZ! (The sound of Yuuji and me shaking our bottles.)

GGYYYYYAAAAHHHHH!!! (The sound of cola being fired at each other.)

PATAPATAPATAPATAPATAPATA!!! (The sound of Yuuji and me covering our eyes and rolling on the floor.)

""MY EYES!!! MYYY EEEEEEEEYYYYYYYYEEEEEEEESSSSS!!!!""

It went in! The cola just went into my eyes!

"Not bad, Akihisa!"

"You're not too bad yourself, Yuuji! As expected for the guy I see as a tough opponent!"

"But I'm going to get serious from now on!"

"I won't lose to you as well!"

Thus, Yuuji starts to grab the can of coffee, and I arm myself with the jelly to bet on this battle of pride.

--Please hold on a minute--

"...Yuuji, want to call a ceasefire?"

"...Ya, this is getting too meaningless."

Before we realised it, we're all stained with fruit jelly, jelly and cola. It sure is disgusting.

"Akihisa, lend me your shower."

"Hm, you can use the towel."

"I'll do that even without you telling me that."

After saying that, Yuuji seems irritated as he pulls the completely drenched clothing on his body as he walks towards the changing room. I then hear him taking off his clothes casually,

"Ah, Yuuji, I forgot to tell you something."

"What?"

Yuuji's voice can be heard from behind the bathroom door, and soon, there's the sound of the water tap being turned on.

"My gas got cut off, so there's no hot water now."

"GWAAHH--!!!"

Clrack! Tatatatata!

"...You could have told me that, you big idiot!"

Wrapped up in a towel, Yuuji's having goosebumps due to the cold.

"Sorry sorry, I forgot to say it. Also, it's not good for your body to put cold water on your heart. You have to first let it drop onto you feet--"

"WHO NEEDS YOU TO EXPLAIN HOW TO TAKE A COLD SHOWER!?"

"Why are you so angry, Yuuji? Oh yeah, you should take a cold shower to cool yourself off."

"I'M ANGRY BECAUSE OF THAT, YOU IDIOT! DAMN IT, I'LL GET A COLD IF THIS CONTINUES..."

"Uu~ Hm...even if you say that, it can't change the fact that my house doesn't have any hot water..."

Even if I have money for it, I have to contact the gas supplier to provide me with some. Now that it's so late, the company workers shouldn't be working now. No matter how urgent we are, we have to wait till tomorrow, and there doesn't seem to be any public baths near my house. It may be a bit too strange to run over to

somebody else's house just to bath.

"Sigh...can't be helped. Akihisa, get ready to go out."

Just as I'm wondering what to do, Yuuji, who changed back into his clothes, suddenly said that to me.

"Going out? Ah, I see, are we going to Yuuji's house?"

"I don't mind, but since we're going to bath, how about we go to someplace that has a bathroom and a swimming pool?"

"A place that has a swimming pool as well?"

Was he talking about a resort somewhere slightly far away from here?

But if we're going to leave now, it'll take some time before we reach there.

"That's right, it has a bathroom and a swimming pool, it's close to your house, and it's free--isn't there such a great place?"

A bathroom and a swimming pool, close to my house and free--ahh, I see.

"OK, I'll get prepared. What about your swimsuit, Yuuji?"

"I'll just wearing my boxers, they aren't any different from my swimming trunks."

"Got it~"

I immediately get ready and head towards Fumitzuki Gakuen with Yuuji.

☆

"...So, do you have anything to say?"

Two hours later, Yuuji and I are standing in the office of Fumitzuki Gakuen, as

we continue to have the lecture from Ironman--also known as Nishimura-sensei.

""It's that guy's fault.""

Our voices overlap each other perfectly, and even the pointing of fingers is completely the same.

"What the heck! Yuuji's definitely in the wrong here! If you had brought some gifts along, this wouldn't have happened!"

"What nonsense are you saying now? If you had paid your gas bills properly, none of this would have happened!"

"What are you saying now? Isn't it good enough that you have water to shower?"

"Don't tell me you have times when the water doesn't come out?"

"...That's enough, I understand what's going on."

Ironman sighs deeply.

"You understood? That's great."

"Since you understood, we should be leaving now. It's kinda late now."

"Yup. Well, we'll be moving off then, Nishimura-sensei--WOAH!!"

Just when I bowed and prepare to walk out of the office, Ironman's burly arms suddenly drapes around Yuuji and my neck. We, we can't breathe!

"You two, no need to be in such a rush, right? It's never too late to have that obligatory moment first, right?"

The strong force grabs our necks. If we try to resist anyhow, our necks will break!

"That, that's right...then please...allow me..."

"Me, me too, allow me to..."

Our self-defense instincts kicked in, and we can only accept this proposal in

tears.

"Very good, then let's begin."

After releasing us, Ironman pulls out paper and pens from somewhere and passes them to us.

"Listen up, translate the following into English 'I reflect on having used the pool without authorization'."

I followed what Ironman said and translate the Japanese into English. Hansei suru () should be translated into 'reflect on'.

"...After writing so many reflection letters,you finally managed to come up with the words 'reflect on'."

"That's because I had to write it twice every week..."

"If you don't want to write it, correct your mistakes--okay, after you're done, show me what you wrote."

"Yes."

I hand over the piece of white paper with English words on it to Ironman. Ironman reads what I wrote--and for some reason, sighed.

"Eh? Why are you sighing?"

That's strange, the English I wrote should be perfect.

"Sakamoto, read this."

Ironman hands over what I translated to Yuuji. After Yuuji receives it, he starts to read what I wrote.

"I reflect on having used the poor without owner's permission."

It was what Yuuji has said, there shouldn't be any problems, right?

"Translate that."

"'I reflect on having made used of the poor without authorization'."

"ARE YOU A SLAVE DRIVER!?"

"Eh, that, that's strange? Why did it become like that?"

"YOU BIG IDIOT! HOW DID YOU MISTAKE THE WORD 'POOR' AS 'POOL'!? AREN'T THESE WORDS THAT WE LEARNED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL!?"

Damn it, that was the only part I thought up myself.

"Okay, next. 'For my reflection, I will voluntarily clean up the pool next week'."

"Is that so? Then it's tough on you. Please do your best."

"(BAM!!) TRANSLATE THAT INTO ENGLISH!"

"Uuu...you devilish teacher..."

Using your fist to hit me? That damned violent teacher!

"Damn it. We're really unlucky that Ironman found us out."

"(BAM!!) CALL ME NISHIMURA-SENSEI!!"

Thus, until daylight, Yuuji and I were forced to have fist-involved remedial lessons.

☆

"Because of that, my weekend got burned."

Morning morning, before self-study period starts, the same old gang gathers around the desk as I said that.

"Such a thing actually happened. What a disaster..."

Revealing a gentle expression as he worries for me is my classmate, Kinoshita Hideyoshi. Anyone who sees him will definitely think that he's a beauty, but biologically, he's a male; truly an unfathomable friend.

"And we're punished to clean up the swimming pool this weekend. Sigh..."

We took so many punches and wrote so many English reflections, and now he wants me to clean the swimming pool. This is totally ridiculous. That Ironman's definitely a devil on the inside and the outside.

"..That's overwork."

Beside us, Tsuchiya Kouta (a.k.a. Muttsulini) said calmly,

"Ya, I'm already feeling tired when I think about having to clean up such a large place."

If there were some sort of reward...

Seemingly understanding what I'm thinking, Yuuji then says,

"It isn't much of a reward, but Ironman did say 'since you have to clean up, the pool will be available to you on that day'."

"Eh? Really?"

So this means that the school pool this weekend will be open for us to use?

"Ya, so Hideyoshi, Muttsulini, you guys want to come along?"

Since we already got the place, it'll be a waste if only Yuuji and me are the ones using it. It's pointless to have it if we can't get some more people. Besides, it's boring to have 2 people alone, and I really hope that Hideyoshi and Muttsulini will come along.

Just as Muttsulini prepares to raise his hand—

"But Muttsulini, you have to help out with the cleaning."

"..."

On hearing Yuuji's words, Muttsulini stopped what he's about to do.

Like what Muttsulini said just now, cleaning the pool is a seriously tough job. It can't be helped that he would hesitate.

"On a side note, I intend to ask Himeji and Shimada to come along."

"...I'll prepare the brushes and cleaning agents."

It is normal that he would agree so easily; if I can get to see Himeji-san, Minami and Hideyoshi in swimsuits, I'll do anything just for that one chance.

"Um, that's right. If we didn't get this chance to use the pool, it'll be unlikely that we'll have this once in a lifetime chance. Please allow me to join in. Of course, I'll help out as well."

"Eh? Cleaning the pool is tough? Are you sure that you're willing to do so?"

"Um, unlike getting the whole pool, I just need to clean the pool, so this is nothing."

Hideyoshi agreed heartily..actually, I'm fine with just seeing him in a swimsuit, so there's no need for him to help out. He's really a good guy.

"So there's only two left. OI~ HIMEJI, SHIMADA."

Yuuji shouted out their names.

"What's up, Sakamoto? Anything you want me for?"

The one who walks over first is the girl who recently returned from Germany. Shimada Minami-san.

Her unique characteristics are her slanted eyes and her ponytail. She's a very forceful girl, and there were a few times when I nearly died in her hands.

"Did you call me, Sakamoto-kun?"

Walking over next is our class air freshener, Himeji Mizuki-san. Gentle and cute, outstanding grades, and even her figure's excellent. She's a girl who can't be nitpicked about, and with all these attributes, she's really scary. No, hold on,

Minami's not too far behind...

"Are you free this weekend? We got the school pool this weekend, want to come along?"

""Eh?""

On hearing the word 'pool', both of them seem stunned. Is there anything wrong with the pool?

"Ah, so you girls obviously have some other plans, right?"

If possible, I really want them to come along, but I can't just force them to cancel their schedules. They should put their own schedules before anything else.

"It, it's not that. I don't really have anything. But...what should I do? If I have to go to a pool, I have to wear a swimsuit, right?"

"That, that's right, got to wear a swimsuit...but my..."

Minami stares at her chest, and Himeji-san stares at her abdomen.

What in the world are they worrying about?

"Sigh, I know that you girls have your own troubles...but let me tell you first. Hideyoshi will be coming along, and he said that he wants to show Akihisa how he looks in a swimsuit."

Seeing them hesitate, Yuuji suddenly said such a ridiculous thing. It's true that Hideyoshi will come alone, but he's not going to just show me how he looks in a swimsuit.

But after hearing what Yuuji said, Minami and Himeji-san turn to glare at Hideyoshi.

"That, that's too despicable, Kinoshita! You're doing that when you're so confident in your own figure!"

"That, that's right! Kinoshita-kun's too sneaky!"

"What are you two talking about?"

Hideyoshi gives a puzzled look after being blamed by them. I don't understand it myself—why are they saying that Hideyoshi's despicable?

"So, how is it?"

"I, I'll go! I, I just need to make preparations..."

"That, that's right. Preparations are important."

Though both of them reveal a complicated look, at least they agreed. That's great.

"Speaking of which, I should start buying a new swimwear. How about I use this chance to get one..."

Hideyoshi strokes his chin as he said this. Hideyoshi's buying a swimsuit? Now I'm excited.

"The, then I'll buy one as well..."

Maybe because of Hideyoshi, Minami seems like she intends to buy a new swimsuit.

Sure is nice to have money...unlike me with my gas cut off...

"Eh? But Minami, didn't you say 'I'm not buying one since I got one last year' when we were talking about buying swimsuits...?"

"Mi, Mizuki! Don't say such a thing! This, this time, what I want to buy is...that's right, it's a duel, so that's different."

"Shimada, the more nervous you get, the more you're digging your own grave."

"...You're thinking too much."

I don't understand what they're talking about. She meant a swimming match, right? To be actually serious in having a swimming contest, does Minami really enjoy swimming that much?

"Ah, oh ya! Yuuji, get Kirishima-san to come over."

"I'll do that even without you telling me that."

Yuuji looks reluctant as he gives me an intriguing look. That's strange? How did it end up like this? I thought Yuuji wouldn't even tell Kirishima-san about this. Did he become honest after the wedding event last week?

"Haha, so Yuuji finally matured."

No, that's not the problem."

Then what is it?"

"Akihisa, think about it. Try putting yourself in my shoes. If I don't tell her, when Shouko finds out, what will happen to me?"

Seeing Yuuji look so seriously, I start to think seriously.

Let me think, if I'm Yuuji, and if Kirishima-san knew that I was playing with girls in swimsuits at the pool...

"Deep into a marsh...no, buried at the bottom of a lake..."

"You don't have to imagine me being a corpse, but anyway, that's the case."

I see. Because of this, Yuuji would reluctantly invite Kirishima-san. But if so, I can see Kirishima-san in a swimsuit. That can be considered a dream come true.

"Anyway, seems like everyone's okay with the arrangements. Let's meet at 10 am on Saturday at the school gate. Don't forget to bring your swimsuits and towels along."

Just as Yuuji said this, the loud bang of Ironman opening the classroom door can be heard.

☆

"Morning~ this weather today sure is great for swimming."

It's the weekend, and under the clear blue cloudless sky, I raise my hand and say hello to Hideyoshi and Himeji-san, who are already waiting at the school gate.

"Morning Akihisa. The weather sure is great today."

"Good morning, Akihisa-kun. Seems like we can enjoy ourselves today."

Both of them respond with bright smiles. Just the fact that I can meet them during a holiday is enough to send me into lala-land. However, to top it all, I can see them in swimsuits! It's not an exaggeration to call it heaven!

Just as I raise my fist triumphantly, another figure approaches. Is that Muttsulini? He heard us, right?

"Morning, Muttsulini~"

"...! (Krack krack krack)"

At this moment, Muttsulini shows a 'don't come near me look' as he holds a camera in his hands.

"Well, I say~ Muttsulini..."

"...I'm busy now."

Muttsulini merely said a few words, as if it's irritating to look at me for the slightest moment.

It's not that I don't understand his feelings, but—

"Muttsulini, it's good to prepare, but wouldn't you be doing that in vain?"

"...Why?"

"Isn't that obvious? Muttsulini...will be unconscious due to nosebleeding."

Cheongsams were already enough to let him drown in the sea of his own nosebleed. If he sees the revealing swimming outfits, Muttsulini definitely won't be able to maintain consciousness.

But after hearing what I said, Muttsulini merely shrugs his shoulders.

"...If you're going to belittle me like that, I'll be really bothered."

At the same time, Muttsulini opens the huge sports bag he brought and shows me what's inside.

"...All the blood transfusion processes are complete."

"Hm, so you intend to take measures to prevent blood loss? That's quite manly."

The sports bag is jammed full with blood packets. I don't know how he got them, but if so, there should be no need to call an ambulance. Seems like he's completely prepared for this.

"Speaking of which, Hideyoshi, didn't you say that you want to bring a new swimsuit? You didn't forget, right?"

"Nn, of course I did bring it."

Hideyoshi prouds straightens himself and opens his bag. That's great. It'll be too pitiful if he can't swim because he forgot to bring his swimwear.

"Speaking of which, what I got is—"

"...! (widen eyes)"

Hideyoshi's declaration that makes people's hearts flutter causes Muttsulini to widen his eyes. Of course, I'm interested as well. What did Hideyoshi buy?

"—Squared swimming trunks!"

""HOW DID IT END UP LIKE THIS!!!???""

Muttsulini and I collapse onto the floor. Squared swimming trunks? Something that guys wear? God, why did you give us such a trial!? Wouldn't Hideyoshi wearing guy's trunks ruin everything!?

"Because you guys seem to view me as a girl, I thought I should let you guys see that I'm a guy—why aren't you guys listening to me?"

"THAT'S TOO MUCH, HIDEYOSHI!! DO YOU HATE ME THAT MUCH!!?"

"...I was wrong about you!"

"Wha, what's wrong? Why must I be scolded by you?"

"I, I guess you shouldn't mind too much, Kinoshita-kun."

Damn it! I thought that only Hideyoshi won't betray me!

Just as I'm thinking of ways to get other swimwear for Hideyoshi to wear—

—Tatatatata!

"Good morning, baka onii-chan!"

"WAHH!!"

Moments after I head the footsteps behind me, something seemed to jump on me. What's going on?

"Hazuki, really! That'll scare Aki!"

Soon after, there's another familiar voice.

Since that's Minami's voice, the one on my back is—

"So it's Hazuki-chan. Good morning to you."

"Heh heh heh, it's been two weeks since we last met."

The one on my back completely displays the attributes of 'childish and innocent' as she shows me a radiant smile is Minami's little sister—Shimada Hazuki. I remember she should be in 5th grade, right? We haven't met since the summoning tournament, and like what Hazuki said, it's been two weeks.

"Baka onii-chan's so cold. Why didn't you ask Hazuki to come along? That's too much!"

"Ah, mm, sorry, Hazuki-chan."

But if I told you that, your sister will dice me up.

"Hazuki found me out when I was about to go out, and she wanted to come along, so I had no choice..."

Minami sighed. I see, so that's why she's late.

"Eh? Sakamoto's not here? I thought I would be the last one."

"No, Sakamoto-kun already arrived. He went to the staff room to borrow the keys—ah, seems like he's here."

Speak of the devil. Just when Himeji-san was mentioning where Yuuji went, we can see him and Kirishima-san walking over from the school compund.

"Morning Yuuji, and good morning, Kirishima-san."

"Oh, seems like you weren't late."

"...Good morning."

Yuuji revealed his arrogant nature the moment he spoke up, and the beautiful girl who's silently standing beside him as she greets us is Kirishima-san, Yuuji's childhood friend. She's not just a beauty, she's also the valedictorian of our second year in Fumitzuki Gakuen. It's said that she's pretty athletic, so there doesn't seem to be any weaknesses—but the sad part is that she doesn't have the eyes in choosing a guy. Besides, there's nothing that can be said about her choosing Yuuji.

"Hello, onii-chan!"

Seeing Yuuji's rough appearance, Hazuki-chan isn't scared at all as she said hello to him energetically.

"Hm? The pipsqueak's here."

"I'm not a pipsqueak, my name's Hazuki!"

"Ah, sorry sorry. So you came along, Hazuki."

"Yup!"

Yuuji looks rather happy as he pats Hazuki on the head. Don't let him fool you, Yuuji really like kids, so he must be happy when he saw Hazuki.

"Okay, it's time to change. I handed the girls changing room key to Shouko, and you girls go follow her. Once we're done, gather at the poolside."

With Yuuji ordering, we split up into boys and girls. Himeji-san and Minami follow Kirishima-san; me and Muttsulini and Hazuki and Hideyoshi are following Yuuji—eh, that's not right.

"Really, Hazuki and Hideyoshi should go to the girls' bathing room. Why aren't you following Kirishima-san?"

I continue to nudge Hazuki and Hideyoshi who're behind us. In this moment, guys should be thinking of going into the girls' changing room, not the other way around.

"Hehehe, I'm just joking."

"But I'm not joking at all..."

If we're to change clothes, Muttsulini will end up returning to sender before he can even see everyone in swimwear. He himself may be satisfied with just that, but I can't just let my friend die like that.

"Oi, stop playing around, hurry up and get over here, Hazuki, Kinoshita."

"YOU, YOU TOO, SHIMADA? NOO!! I WON'T GO TO THE GIRL'S CHANGING ROOM TO CHANGE!!"

Hideyoshi stubbornly refuses to go to the girl's changing room.

But even if he's not willing, it'll be bad if we're in the guy's changing room...

"Erm...if that's the case, why don't we let Kinoshita-kun change in another place?"

Himeji-san timidly raised her hand. As expected of Himeji-san, to be able to think of such a good idea. Now nobody will complain.

"U, ugh...I can't explain it, but I'll let this pass for now...I'll just make everyone change their mindsets once you people see me in a swimsuit..."

Hideyoshi muttered as he clenches forcefully on the bag with a swimsuit in it. Ugh~hm, squared trunks...no matter what, I can't imagine Hideyoshi being compatible with that.

"Okay, since we decided, hurry up and take action, stop wasting time."

"Hm, you're right."

"...(Nods head)."

Thus we all head towards the changing rooms in 3 different directions.

—20 minutes later—

"The girls still haven't changed, huh?"

"Seems that way."

"...(Nods head)."

Having changed into our squared trunks, we're standing near the pool, waiting anxiously for the girls to come out. The feeling is just like that of a festival, I'm feeling really excited.

"Muttsulini, you ready? This concerns your own life!"

"...No problems, I already practised all 236 styles yesterday."

I really want to know what styles are there.

"...And I already identified 256 different styles of bleeding."

"Doesn't that mean that you're guaranteed a 100% chance of dying?"

Seems like Muttsulini's dead no matter what happens.

"Oh, seems like somebody's here."

Yuuji suddenly said. Turning back, a little figure is running towards us from the girl's changing room. That should be Hazuki-chan, right? Hmm, seeing an elementary school kid wear the deep blue swimsuit sure makes me—unable to smile at all!

"WHA WHA WHA WHA WHA WHA WHAT SHOULD WE DO!? THAT SHOULD BE A SCHOOL SWIMSUIT, RIGHT!?"

"...I want my lawyer (drip drip drip)."

"I say...you guys should calm down first. There's no need to get so excited over seeing an elementary school kid in a swimsuit."

Yuuji calmly retorted.

Is, is that right? It's true that she's an elementary school kid, but we have no need to be so embarrassed. Calm down, hurry up and calm down. Look at her calmly before continuing.

"Onii-chans~ I kept you waiting!"

I calmly look at Hazuki-chan who's running at us. The large words 'Shimada' is sewn on the chest of her swimsuit, but that ample chest that doesn't suit an elementary school kid causes the word to be out of shape. And the limbs that aren't covered by the swimsuits are exposed under the sun, looking really healthy and eye-catching. This gal has unlimited potential.

Hmm, I see. Like what Yuuji said, if I think about this calmly, this isn't nothing big.

"Just 2 years of probation after all."

"...I'll plead guilty even if I'm convicted (drip drip drp)"

"You two are only acting cool!"

But speaking of which, she doesn't look like Minami's little sister at all. That...what should I say, the part with the nametag on it and raised seems...

I hesitate on whether I should focus my eyes on that part that doesn't look like it fits an elementary school kid. At this moment, someone else comes running over from the girl's changing room.

"Dam, damn it, Hazuki! How can you take my thing away like that! Hurry up and return it to me!"

What appears in front of me is Minami, who for some reason is covering her chest with one hand. What's that?

"...Breasts pads."

"Eh?"

I turn around to look at Muttsulini, who's muttering to himself, and sees Hazuki-chan's tummy inflate for some reason.

"Ah~ it dropped."

Hazuki-chan reaches into her swimsuit and starts to look for something, and the bump at the tummy slowly moves towards the chest. Ahh, I see, so she stuffed breast pads into her swimsuit. No wonder, I was wondering how come an elementary school kid's breasts are so big.

"Hm! If so, what Minami wants back is the brea—"

"WATCH THIS, I'M BETTING EVERYTHING ON IT!"

"NO YOU CAN'T MINAMI! THAT ONE HIT CAN MAKE ME LOSE MY MEMORY OR EVEN ERASE MY EXISTENCE!!"

I seem to have found out something I shouldn't have found out.

"Uuu...I actually went all the way to prepare this...Hazuki, you big idiot."

Minami muttered bitterly. I can't really tell since she's using her hand to cover her chest, but Minami should be wearing a 2-piece swimsuit. She does look like a beach volleyball player, so cool...

"Wha, what? Is it weird that I'm wearing this?"

Minami seems like she doesn't want to let others see her in a swimsuit as she curls up. Why doesn't she have any confidence in herself?

"It, it's not that at all! Well...I find that it suits you a lot!"

"Eh...Aki, are you serious?"

"Um, yeah...your limbs, chest and breasts are all slender, and I find them pretty. Your toes are stepping on mine—OW OW OWWW!!!"

"Didn't you just call me flat-chested twice?"

Those prideful eyes of Minami are raised several inches as she glares angrily at me. But the swimsuit Minami's wearing is really cute. Her face is already cute, and her sheep-like limbs are enough to make up for the lack of chest ampleness. And since she's so charming, it's not logical to not call her cute when she's wearing such a swimsuit.

Though I say this, since it's Minami, I'll likely be sent into heaven if I say it, so it's best to follow the gold rule of 'silence is golden' and keep quiet about it so that I won't suffer.

"Shimada, you don't really have to be so angry. Though Akihisa says this, he definitely minds about your look in this swimsuit."

"Yu, Yuuji!? What are you saying!? I'm not..."

"Ah, is, is that so? Really, Aki, couldn't you be more honest about it...you idiot."

Minami said that in a teeny-weeny voice. Really? Since you said so, I'll just honestly say what I wanted to say.

"Minami's chest is so small."

"I'll wreck your eyes, left and right, equally."

See? I'm about to be sent into heaven.

Just as we're admiring Minami and Hazuki-chan's swimsuits, the 3rd assassin walks over from the changing room.

The long black hair is swaying about as the person walks elegantly like a model. The body that's of high-class all around looks like she's unreal, causing me to almost forget to breathe. I stare at her every action—Kirishima Shouko-san really dazzles me.

She continues to look unperturbed as she reaches her hand out and pokes Yuuji's eyes.

"WAAAAHHHHHH!!! MY EYES! MY EEEEYYYYEEESSSS!!!"

"Woah! Even the act of poking Sakamoto in the eyes in so beautiful..."

"Hmm, to be able to see such a beautiful figure, it's worth sacrificing Yuuji's eyes..."

"THAT'S BECAUSE THE MISFORTUNE DIDN'T OCCUR ON YOU!!!"

I don't care what the heck Yuuji's shouting as I still focus on Kirishima-san.

"Wah...onee-chan's so pretty..."

Kirishima-san's wearing a slightly more mature looking white bikini and short skirt. These alone wouldn't be much, but coupled with her perfect face, crystal clear skin and silky long hair, it's better to describe her as 'elegant' instead of 'pretty'. Anyway, she's full of charm.

"...I'm really happy to hear you say that..."

Kirishima-san lowers her blushing face. THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES!

"Oi, Yuuji, you should have something you want to say to Kirishima-san, right?"

Though Kirishima-san must be really happy to hear us praise her like that, she should be really mindful about that person she likes, right? We got to let Yuuji praise her somehow.

I reach my hand out and wordlessly push Yuuji from behind.

"Shouko."

"...Mm."

"Get me a tissue, my tears can't stop flowing for some reason."

"YUUJI YOU BIG IDIOT! YOU SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY, RIGHT!?"

"I CAN'T EVEN SEE ANYTHING NOW! WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY!?"

This damned bastard doesn't understand a girl's feelings at all!

"Really, that Yuuji's useless, don't you say, Muttsulini?"

I turn to talk to Muttsulini, who's completely silent, probably because he's busy doing blood transfusion. However, Muttsulini didn't respond; instead, he's stoned in place as he stares at the other direction.

"Eh, what's wrong, Muttsulini?"

Stunned because he's surrounded by charming girls wearing swimsuits—this guy's response isn't normal at all. His response is too weird. What's going on?

"...Sorry, Akihisa."

Muttsulini lets out a hoarse and barely audible voice as he continues to mutter while trying his best to breath.

"Eh? Why?"

"...I'm...going...first..."

Muttsulini suddenly collapses with a large amount of bleeding.

"Mu, Muttsulini!? MUTTSULIN—"

DAMN IT, WHO DID THIS!? WHO CAUSED MUTTSULINI TO BECOME LIKE THIS?

I hurried over to carry Muttsulini, who collapsed onto the floor, and casually turn to look behind—

"So, sorry, it took me quite some time to tie the lace behind my back."

There stood a biological weapon.

Not, NOT GOOD!

"TOO DANGEROUS!!!(PHOOSH)"

I quickly stabbed my eyes. Secret technique –self-poke into eyes!

"A, Aki? What are you doing?"

That was close...it I continued to look, I would most likely come close to death. The instant judgement saved me.

"Excuse me, but what's wrong with Akihisa-kun?"

"Ah, Mizuki, I don't really know what's going on, but Aki just stabbed himself in the eyes—"

All I can hear is that Minami seems to see something unbelievable as she gasped. Damn it! Did Minami follow Muttsulini's steps and collapsed?

"Minami?"

"Worauf fur einem Standard hat Gott jene unterschieden, die haben, und jene, die nicht haben!? Was war fur mich ungenugend!"[3]

I thought that Minami already got used to Japan, but it seems like her old habit of lapsing into German when she's confused hasn't changed at all.

"Uuu...at least my vision's recovering—"

"...Yuuji, you can't look (kuoosh)."

"GUUAAHH! NOT AGAIN!? WHY ME NOW!?"

"Wah, onee-chan's chest is so ample..."

With Yuuji's wail as the BGM, Hazuki-chan cried out in surprised. Even the normally stoic Kirishima-san's voice is trembling somewhat.

"Eve, everyone? What's wrong?"

The biological weapon herself doesn't seem to notice this as Himeji-san asks while looking puzzled.

"Hahaha, there's nothing wrong at all. Himeji-san, can you please wait a while?"

"Ah, okay..."

I repeatedly take a few deep breaths to allow myself to calm down. Okay, this will do.

After making my psychological preparations, I slowly widen my eyes. Hoho, if I can calm down and deal with it normally, a swimwear-clad Himeji-san isn't anything much.

"The weather today sure is great, Himeji-san! (GUAAHHH!!!)"

"Ah, Akihisa-kun? A lot of blood is spilling out of your nostrils!"

WHO IS IT! WHO'S THE GUY WHO SAID THAT 'THE BODY IS STILL HONEST'!

"Sorry, Himeji-san, please hold on for a while."

"Oh, Okay. I don't know what's going on, but I'll wait."

"Thanks. You really helped me out a lot here."

I then lift my nose up and empty my mind...that's right, I did see Himeji-san's tender white skin, and it was really—

"Thi, this isn't good! Akihisa-kun will die of blood loss!"

The blood flow increase. How did this happen?

"Are you alright, baka onii-chan?"

"Ah, mm, thanks Hazuki-chan."

That was a huge relief, Hazuki-chan passed me a piece of tissue. Now I can finally stop my nosebleed.

"Okay, again..."

For the third time, I stare at the swimwear-clad Himeji-san. My nose instantly became hot the moment her figure enters my eyes, but at least I finally managed to stop it.

"That...Akihisa-kun?"

"..."

I try to say something, but I could say anything.

Himeji-san figure enters my eyes, and that get-up of hers is too refreshing. She's wearing a pink bikini that reveals much of her large bust and a skirt on her waist. The normally pure and innocent looking Himeji-san has a 10 times 10 killing ability when she's in this swimwear now. Besides, that huge bust that doesn't match her petite body is really disastrous. I feel like I'm challenging a human's limits.

"I, is it strange for me to wear thi..."

Like Minami just now, Himeji-san curls herself up as she doesn't look very confident. Can't let this go on! I got to say something now!

"It, it's not strange at all! This swimwear fits you well!"

"Really?"

"Of course it's true! I can bet on a life!"

Actually, Muttsulini bet on his own life.

"This is good...my hard work in limiting my food intake finally paid off..."

Worked hard to limit food intake? No way, she still has such quality! What will happen to me if she's serious?

"Mizuki, as expected, you're definitely my greatest opponent...you better remember this!"

Having finally recovered, Minami glares at Himeji-san's breasts like an enemy.

If she has even 1/5 of Himeji-san's own, Minami would be like an ordinary person.

"Ugh...I still can't see...is everyone here?"

Rubbing his still-closed eyes in pain, Yuuji's still tearing as he asked us.

"Hideyoshi's not here yet."

"Hideyoshi had to go to the campus instead of the changing rooms, so he had to spend a longer time."

"...Hideyoshi's wearing squared trunks..."

Finally managing to recover and replenish his blood, Muttsulini said with a somewhat lonely voice. Ya, I understand how unhappy he is. Hideyoshi looks so cute, so he should wear a swimsuit that suits him!"

"Baka onii-chan, why do you look so sad?"

Hazuki-chan looks worried as she asks me. She's really a good kid...

"Sorry for making you worried, Hazuki-chan. I'm just feeling a little lonely, you don't have to worry about it."

"Hazuki, it's stupid to worry about Aki, you don't have to—"

Speaking halfway, Minami's suddenly speechless. What happened?

"Sorry for making everyone wait, took me quite some time to change, and there's quite the distance from the building to the pool..."

A familiar voice rings in my ears.

This voice and tone, Hideyoshi's finally here, so everyone's—

"sncfksurjkmxaoe,m(((Don't worry Hideyoshi, we weren't waiting for too long)"

"Calm down, Akihisa, this is planet Earth."

Yuuji calmly retorted just as I'm all panicky now. But this is because he can't see

anything now. Can he say that so calmly when he sees what's in front of him?

"How, how is it? Don't I look more manly now?"

Looking shy but trying to display the swimsuit, Hideyoshi came walking towards us.

"Wah, this onee-chan's so pretty!"

"Ugh, you're calling me pretty? Shimada imouto, I don't know what's wrong with you, but as you can see, I'm a guy!"

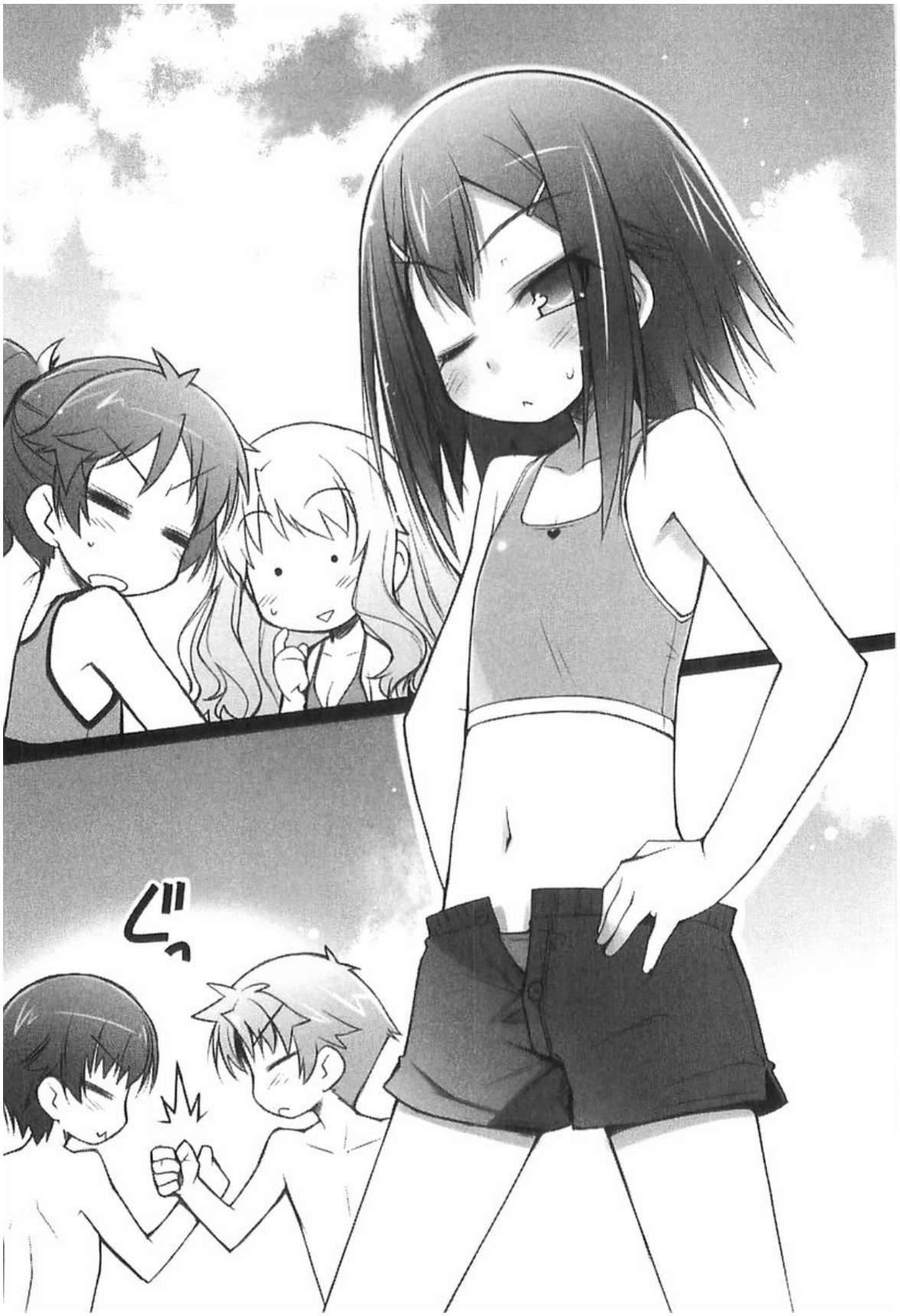
"Eh? But Hazuki feels that this is a girl's swimwear."

"WHA, WHAT DID YOU SAY!?"

That's right, Hideyoshi's wearing a squared trunks swimsuit—but that's a girl's swimwear.

"Ki, Kinoshita...how long do you plan on obstructing us?"

"Kinoshita-kun's too despicable...actually using squared trunks to make us relax. You betrayed us in the end!"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Basically, Hideyoshi's wearing a sports swimwear that's similar to what Minami's wearing. The top's a short sleeveless tight vest, and the bottom's an ordinary pair of trunks. There's a pair of shorts added outside the swimming trunks, and the top button is unbuttoned. This is a squared trunks, though it's a girl's swimwear.

"Hideyoshi! You finally detected our feelings!"

"...I will salute this swimwear as payment for our everlasting friendship and lust."

"It, it's not like that! I should have gotten a guy's swimwear! I even told the shop attendant that I wanted to buy 'an ordinary pair of squared trunks'!"

"I guess that attendant must have been mistaken..because Kinoshita-kun only said that he wants 'squared trunks'."

"...Ya, I would have recommended the same thing."

"How, how did it end up like this...no wonder I felt that it's strange; why would guy's swimsuit have a vest on top..."

Hideyoshi collapsed onto the floor and clenches his fist and teeth as he said this. Even at this moment, I can only find it weird, it does fit Hideyoshi's personality after all. To the shop attendant we never met before, Good Job!

Just as we're discussing this, Kirishima-san looks worried as she says to Yuuji,

"...Yuuji, are your eyes alright?"

"Hm? Ahh, they're alright. I can see more or less. If you are worried about that, you shouldn't have done that right from the beginning, right—"

"...If so, here's another one (phoosh)"

"A, A THIRD TIME!? WHAT SORT OF HATRED DO YOU HAVE AGAINST ME!!?"

"...There're too many things here that Yuuji can't see."

We're already at the pool, but the way things are going, Yuuji will end up in the hospital before he can even step foot into the water.

☆

"Well, Akihisa-kun..."

After doing our warm-ups and jumping into the pool, Himeji-san, who slowly climbed down the ladder heads towards me.

"Hm? What's the matter, Himeji-san?"

"Can Akihisa-kun swim well?"

"Ah, hm...okay, about an ordinary person's standard..."

"...Akihisa-kun, why are you turning your eyes away?"

Because you just took off your skirt, Himeji-san!

"Actually, I don't know how to swim at all."

"Eh? You can't swim?"

In a certain sense, this is actually about what I expected. Though it's sorry to Himeji-san, I can't imagine her swimming quickly and freely at all.

"Hm? Mizuki can't swim?"

Minami said this as she energetically jumped into to pool. Minami and Himeji-san have their own contrasts, so they have things that they can do well. Forget about running or high jump, she's really skilled in sports.

"Yeah. Actually, it's kind of embarrassing for me to say it, but I only know how to float..."

Himeji-san said seriously. Even if she can't swim, she must be trying hard to

learn it.

"Since Mizuki's been teaching me in studies, I'll teach you how to swim today!"

Minami straightens her back up as she seems somewhat satisfied. Normally, Himeji-san would be teaching her about studies, so she should be rather happy to be able to repay her by teaching her in sports.

"O, okay. Then please take care fo me."

"Leave it to me! Don't see me like this, I know how to swim well."

Seeing the two people talk when their positions have swapped is rather refreshing.

Normally in class, grade A Himeji-san would be teaching Minami who's of grade F—

"—So this time, Minami seems to be A and Himeji-san's F."

"I can at least make it to a B!"

"GUAH!"

WHY? WHY DID YOU ATTACK ME OUT OF A SUDDEN!

"...Next year, next year...I'll definitely..."

Minami turns away as she mutters softly.

I don't know what's going on, but it seems like she's self-pitying when she just said that.

"A, Akihisa-kun...saying that directly in front of others is..."

Facing me, even Himeji-san's blushing. It's true that it's a bit disrespectful to say that she has class F standard of swimming, and it's really disrespectful to say if behind her back. I'll sincerely reflect on that.

"...Yuuji, I like to mention that I'm C."

"What are you talking about?"

Not far away, Yuuji and Kirishima-san are having an unbelievable conversation. As for Muttsulini, it's a mystery why his eyes are shining.

"Mizuki, I know the reason why you can't swim."

"Eh? Why?"

"Because you're in such a large float! You can't swim no matter how long it takes! Hurry up and take it off and give it to me!"

"Mi, Minami, please calm down! You're looking really scary here!"

"Mizuki doesn't understand anything at all! I'm so sad that I managed to swim so fast because I don't have any resistance!"

"Ev, even if you say that, I..."

Seems like they're talking about whether they can swim fast or not, and I better not disturb them.

"Then I'll go to another side. Try your best, both of you."

"A, Akihisa-kun, Minami's looking really scary out of a sudden!"

"Hohoho...Mizuki, these are all useless fats! You should exercise more and burn them off."

Minami seems like she's overly excited. Even though I'm sorry about Himeji-san who's asking me for help here, I have to be firm. This is for Himeji-san to learn how to swim.

"Mi, Minami, it's not really a bad thing! Shoulder aches are rather tiring..."

"I don't mind even if it's like that! Even if it's just a should ache, I will endure it!"

While I left, I heard the passionate voice in what Minami said.

"Onii-chan!"

"WAH!"

Something rode on me out of a sudden, causing me to be unable to support myself and sink.

"Wh, what is it?"

"Hehehe, Hazuki wants to play with onii-chan!"

I could see Hazuki-chan's bright smile once I floated up to the surface. So that was Hazuki-chan who jumped on my back.

"Hm, okay, what shall we play?"

"Let's play 'water devil'?"

"Water devil? Are we playing catching in the water?"

I see, it's not much different from when we play on the land. Seems interesting.

"It's not catching, it's 'water devil'!"

"Is it different from catching?"

I thought that the 'water devil' will be about playing catching in the water.

"In 'water devil', when the person acting as the devil catches the person who isn't the devil, he will—"

Hazuki-chan looks up as she tells me how to play 'water devil'. However, it's about just what I guessed, once the person acting as the devil catches someone—

"—will drag the person into the water and wait for him to drown."

"IT'S THE DEVIL! THAT'S TRULY DEVILLISH!!!"

And even the 'game' aspect of it is gone. Elementary school kids nowadays are

really scary...no wait, this may be a game Hazuki-chan made up herself.

"No way, Hazuki. This game is really dangerous."

"Hmmm...we can't play that?"

Hazuki-chan puffs her cheeks unhappily. Seems like as a big brother, I have to teach er how dangerous this 'water devil' game is.

"Listen, Hazuki-chan. This game is really dangerous. I'll show you—oi~ Kirishima-san~"

"...What is it?"

On hearing my call, Kirishima-san quickly swims over. She really can swim.

"I want to ask you and Yuuji to demonstrate the 'water devil' game to Hazuki-chan. The rules are simple, drag Yuuji into the water, make him drown, and then do CPR on him to win."

"...I'm going then."

After nodding slightly, Kirishima-san quickly swims away like a torpedo as she swims towards Yuuji.

"Oi? What's going on? What's wrong with my feet...GUAAHHH....WHO, WHO IS IT? WHO'S DRAGGING ME INTO THE WATE—(GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP)"

"...Yuuji, hurry up and drown."

"GUUAAAHH!! SHO, SHOUKO? ARE YOU CRA...(GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP)"

Far away, the game of 'water devil' is under way.

"See, isn't that dangerous?"

"Yes...Hazuki won't play 'water devil' anymore..."

It's good that she understands. If we can teach her the importance of life, sacrificing one or two of Yuuji's life is nothing.

"AKIHISA! THIS IS YOUR DOING, RIGHT?!"

"WAH! KIRISHIMA-SAN! YOU HAVE TO SECURE HIM BETTER!"

"...Sorry."

"Wah, the two onii-chans are swimming really fast!"

The 'water devil' game between me, Yuuji and Kirishima-san—START!

☆

"Ah? I was wondering who was using the pool, so it's class rep?"

While Yuuji and I were risking our lives to play 'water devil', a somewhat familiar voice echoes throughout the poolside.

"...Aiko?"

Kirishima-san stops as she turns to look over, and Yuuji and I stopped our deathmatch as well to look in the direction of where the voice came from.

Standing over there is a short-haired girl in uniform. Hm? I seem to have met her before somewhere.

"So it's class A's Kudou-san. What are you doing here?"

Yuuji calls out her name. Kudou-san? Ahh, speaking of which, she did face off against Muttsulini in the test summoning battle. We didn't get many chances to interact with each other, so I couldn't remember her name.

"Me? I'm from the swimming club."

"I see, but the swimming club doesn't need to practice today, right?"

"Yup, but I only remembered after I came to school. And then I heard some noise from the pool, so I thought I should come take a look. If you don't mind, can I join you?"

"Ahh, you can, it's not our pool anyway—"

Yuuji just points his finger at where Minami is.

"—And we seem to have one more person here for some reason."

Looking back at where Yuuji's is point, there seems to be a girl I don't recognize.

"Onee-sama! Why didn't you ask Miharu out to play at the pool!? Miharu loves onee-sama so much!!"

"Miharu!? Why are you here!? Nobody else should knows that I'm here to swim today!"

"Miharu already set up a special information network to prevent onee-sama from being attacked!"

Who's that girl? Seems like she's someone Minami knows of, but their relationship isn't good. Minami's even trying to swim away from that girl.

"Seems like it got noisy out of sudden."

Hideyoshi casually swims over to us. Behind him are Himeji-san and Hazuki-chan who'll tiptoe on the floor from time to time. Hazuki-chan is probably following Himeji-san's speed, and not that she can't swim.

"Ah? Yuuko—most probably not? Are you Yuuko's little brother?"

"Mm, that's right. Are you nee-san's friend?"

"That's right, I'm her classmate."

Hideyoshi has a twin sister who looks completely similar to him. The first time I saw her, I was really bothered by how both of them look too similar.

"Excuse me, but may I join in?"

"Hm? There's no need to be polite with me. This is the school's pool after all."

After Kudou-san finished, she carries her sports bag and heads towards the changing room.

After walking halfway, she turns her head around—

"If you want to peep, please don't get caught."

—And left these words.

Erm, let me think...does she mean that she's willing to let us peep? Since the girl herself said so, how can we as guys not take action—

"...Yuuji, if you dare move, I'll pinch you to death."

"Akihisa-kun, if you dare do any unnecessary things, you have to bear the consequences, you know?"

What's with this 'even an elephant can be killed' atmosphere? Now I can't just do whatever I want...since things ended up like this, there's no other way, I can only put all my hopes on Muttsulini!

"Oh yeah, where's Muttsulini? I haven't seen him up till now."

There's already the perfect environment, it's too weird for Muttsulini to not be around! Right now, I should be hearing the sound of the shutter being pressed rapidly!

"Muttsulini? Oh, he's over there replenishing his blood."

"...I see, no wonder he's so silent..."

Muttsulini doesn't even have the time to take photos. That figure of him desperately replenishing his own blood is too agonizing.

☆

After playing for a while, Yuuji and I leave the pool to rest on the bench beside the pool. Of course, we naturally ended up looking at our friends who're playing in the pool.

"I say, Yuuji..."

What is it?"

PAM! The loud sound of the beachball hitting the surface can be heard.

"Maybe I'm thinking too much..."

"Ahh."

BAM! And the forceful sound of the ball being hit can be heard.

"Those two...are supposed to be playing water volleyball. Why is the atmosphere around them so precarious?"

"Don't worry, I'm thinking the same thing as well."

"I won't lose, Minami-chan!"

"Just what I wanted, Mizuki! You can't beat me in sports!"

With spirit that looks like it's going to break the ball in half, Himeji-san and Minami continue to launch attacks at each other. They seem to be pretty friendly just now, and for some reason, it ended up like this.

"Oh yeah, Akihisa."

"Hm? What is it?"

"What about the movie ticket I gave you?"

He's talking about that right? Because I forced Yuuji and Kirishima-san to take part in the wedding experience, he specially gave me the movie ticket as a gift, right? I remember that thing is—

"Because Himeji-san and Minami seemed like they wanted it, I just gave it to them."

"...Can't be wrong now. That's the reason."

"Eh? What is it?"

"The loser will have to give it up. Don't forget!"

"I won't forget! If Minami-chan loses, she can't break the agreement!"

"You too!"

Ahh, they seem to have used something as a bet, which explains why they're so into this match. Forget about Minami, I'm shocked that even Himeji-san's so enthusiastic about it.

"Ahh...Himeji and Shimada...the match between them looks interesting. Which side has the advantage?"

Maybe Hideyoshi's tired as he left the pool and joins us on the bench. The sight of him scratching his head is ridiculously bewitching for some reason...

"Himeji has the advantage right now."

"Hm? I find this unexpected. If it's ball sports movement, Shimada's at the advantage."

"That may be so if it's a 1v1 match."

While saying that, Yuuji lifts his chin and points to their bases.

Himeji-san as Kirishima-san helping her, and beside Minami, the girl called Miharu (?) is chasing the ball around.

"I see. That Kirishima's sporting ability's rather good. She sure is impressive to be able to take on Shimada like that."

The difference in ability between Himeji-san and Minami is apparent, but the winner isn't decided by this. It's because Himeji-san's partner—Kirishima-san is really good. She skillfully hit the ball into places where Minami can't reach, allowing for easy points.

"Speaking of which, Shimada's partner isn't moving very naturally. I find that she's deliberately allowing them to win."

"Ah, so Hideyoshi feels the same way?"

On the other hand, Minami's partner been making mistakes one after another. The serves are all awry, and either she missed her receives or she smacked them out of bounce. Looking at her pose and movements, she should be rather skilled in that.

"Miharu! You must be letting them win, right!?"

"Of course not, onee-sama! Miharu is seriously (letting them win) playing! It's pointless to go on a date with that kind of thing at all!"

"So you deliberately became my partner just to make me lose..."

"Onee-sama! The ball's coming here!"

"Eh? Damn it! You should have said so earlier!"

Just as Minami's team is squabbling for some reason, the ball the Himeji-san served silently landed on Minami's side.

"Okay, it's 15 points now. First set goes to rep and Himeji-san's team!"

The referee Kudou-san raises her hand to declare the winning team of the first round.

"First round?"

"I guess it's a 3 set match. Can't probably be all the way till 5."

"That's the case."

Though it's a game, they're really serious about it, even remembering to change sides.

"Onee-chan, do your best!"

Hazuki-chan's innocently cheering for her older sister, almost forgetting that there's an ominous atmosphere here.

"And the 2nd set will now begin. The one serving this time is Shimada-san's side, right?"

Kudou tosses the ball at Minami, who picks up the ball and passes it to her partner.

"Ok, so the 2nd set begins now!"

"Ahh! My hand slipped!"

The moment Kudou-san said that, the beachball that was thrown into mid-air got tossed behind for some reason.

"Ok, Love 1."

Kudou-san picks up the ball that hit the wall and bounced back, and tosses it at Minami's side.

"If the partner is like that, Shimada won't have a chance of winning."

Yuuji said this as he sees the situation.

"Ya, no matter how good Minami is, she can't win on her own."

"According to how I see it, this match is decided."

Me and Hideyoshi agree with Yuuji's view. If Minami's partner can be a bit more focused, that won't be much of a problem. But it seems like she doesn't intend to win at all.

"Miharu! The next time you serve, do it with all you got!"

"Tha, that's too much, onee-sama! Miharu's doing her best for onee-sama, how can onee-sama suspect my hard work!?"

"No need to put up such a lousy act! Listen up Miharu! This is my final warning!"

"Please believe me, onee-sama! Miharu won't lie to onee-sama at all!"

"Listen up! I'll give my final ultimatum! If you still won't get serious—"

"That's why I say that Miharu's been serious in this."

"—From tomorrow onwards, I'll call Miharu 'Shimizu-san'."

"..."

"Oi, did you see that serve just now? That was a 12-6 curveball!"[4]

"I'm stunned. What in the world did she do for this high-difficulty technique!?"

"Even Shouko couldn't reach that ball..."

"Sorry onee-sama! Miharu lied to you!"

"Don't worry, Miharu! We'll continue to be best friends!"

Both of them hug each other tightly.

What's going on? For some reason, they seem to be having some sort of a drama skit.

"But seeing how things are doing, the situation has reversed."

"Ya. Though it's pitiful to say this, I say that Himeji isn't really good at sports."

Ah, another 1st strike. That partner of Minami is a whole lot different from before. Even her expression is full of killing intent.

"Sigh, Himeji's really pitiful. The rare chance got lost like that."

Beside me, Yuuji muttered to himself.

PA! At this moment, the sound of something bursting can be heard as it deafens the entire pool.

"Woah, that's a powerful hit. That girl actually burst the beachball."

"Eh? Was that the sound of the ball being burst?"

"Ya, the moment Shimada's partner served the ball, I saw the ball explode."

I turn to look at the pool. There seems to be what's left of the ball flowing on the water. What sort of power did that girl use to play...

"Ah! Sorry, Miharu seemed to have used too much force. I'll go find another ball; onee-sama and the rest, please rest first."

After saying that, the girl who's Minami's partner walks out of the pool. She's probably going to the pool store.

"...I'm a bit tired."

"You're right. Let's rest while she finds another ball."

The girls who were playing volleyball in the pool came up to rest. I warn myself not to be too attracted by their swimsuits as I ask Himeji-san,

"You people worked hard. Everyone was so serious, even we found that interesting."

"Ah, yes, thank you for your praise. I feel really happy to be able to play with everyone."

"Haha, that's good to hear."

Hearing her say this, at least our punishment from Ironman is worth it.

"Oh yeah. Why could Akihisa-kun borrow this pool?"

Himeji-san lowers her chin and asked. That's right, it seems like I never told her why.

"Well, a lot of things happened, so we're in charge of cleaning the pool. The benefit is that we get to use the pool for the entire day."

Of course, I can't just honestly tell her that Ironman punished us.

"Eh? You have to clean? The whole pool?"

"Yup. But it's not just me. Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsulini will be helping as well."

Speaking of which, to be able to spend such a happy time together, cleaning the pool isn't much at all.

"Cleaning the pool? I'll help out as well."

Of course, Himeji-san naturally raises her hand. Such a good girl.

"Thanks, but as for cleaning, the four of us should be enough. And we only prepared four people's worth of cleaning tools."

I'm really grateful that you have such intentions, but leave the menial work of cleaning the pool to us.

And if I have to say it, it's thanks to you two that Muttsulini agreed to help. In other words, you two helped us quite a lot.

"Well..."

"Uu~it can't be helped that you don't have any cleaning equipment."

"Ah, I know! If that's the case..."

Himeji-san suddenly looks like she has a great idea. 'THOMP!', at that moment, Yuuji, Muttsulini, Hideyoshi and me all realize instinctively. Is she trying to...

"Because there was a slight failure, there's not enough for everyone to eat. I

didn't want to say it—"

Himeji-san smiles sweetly as she says,

"—Actually, I made 3 chiffon cakes this morn..."

"ROUND ONE!!!" (Yuuji)

"THE BATTLE OF THE FASTEST!!!" (Me)

"FIGHT IT OUT, SWIMMING RACE!!!" (Yuuji and me)

""YEAH!!!"" (Hideyoshi and Muttsulini)

Before Himeji-san could complete her sentence, we shouted the code.

The girls seem like they couldn't catch up to the current developments as they all look shocked.

"Explain the rules, Akihisa!"

"OK! The rules are simple. Swim one lap in the pool. The first one to reach the end wins. It's a very ordinary swimming race!"

That's right. This is really an ordinary swimming race. It's basically about seeing who's the fastest.

However, the winner and everyone else have to face different outcomes. Why? Do you ask? That's because Himeji-san made 3 chiffon cakes, and there's only 4 of us. In other words, there can only be one person who'll remain alive. Whether it's 2nd or 3rd place, there's no difference in the disaster that awaits us.

"Baka onii-chan, what's with you? Hazuki is shocked that onii-chan suddenly wants a swimming race."

"Hazuki-chan, listen. Sometimes, men have to bet on something important."

"Wah~ onii-chan's so cool. You're betting on your pride, right?"

Nope, we're betting on our lives.

"I don't know what's going on, but a battle to see who's the fastest between 4 of you seems interesting."

"Ya, in terms of physique, Sakamoto-kun should be the best...."

"...But in terms of speed, Yoshii and Tsuchiya aren't too far apart."

We can hear them whispering to each other. To us, it doesn't matter who wins, the most important thing is whether we can safely live to see the next day.

"Heh~ seems interesting. I'll be your umpire then."

After Kudou-san said this, she stands up and moves towards the umpire's place at the end point. The school's pool is 25m long. In other words, this means that this is a 50m race.

With burning will, we get away. Yuuji's standing to my right, and Hideyoshi's on my left.

"Ok. We're about to start. Contestants ready—"

Kudou-san shouted loudly.

While getting into position, my mind starts to move.

Muttsulini's normally a strong opponent, but he's rather weak now because he lost a lot of blood, so he isn't much of a threat. Hideyoshi isn't weak, but in terms of atheleticism, I won't lose to him.

"GET READY~~"

There's only one person who can survive. Muttsulini's extremely weak now, so he won't pose much of a threat. I should be able to handle Hideyoshi as well. Thus, I only have one enemy—

"—START!"

""GO TO HELL!!!"

The moment Kudou-san shouted out, Yuuji and I exchange glances with each other leap fiercely at each other.

"Damn it, so Yuuji's thinking the same thing as me?"

He actually jumped at me instead of into the water. How evil is that guy!

"Aren't you doing such a despicable thing as well! You shameless bastard!"

"I can say the same to you!!"

I get into position again and jump at Yuuji.

Since the leap wasn't as effective as what I expected, I can only rely on my fists if I want to make Yuuji shut up! Both of us are wearing trunks, so neither judo nor akido can work. In this short distance, if I can control the platform, I can gain victory...

"Onee-chan, onii-chan wanted to have a race. Why aren't they jumping into the water?"

"Hazuki, you can't look at them. Idiocy can spread!"

I seem to hear such a disrespectful conversation.

"I say, you two, you can continue to fight all you want, but Kinoshita-san and Muttsulini-san are almost back!"

Matching Yuuji's movements, I intended to launch my killer blow, but the referee just said something really unsatisfying.

"Oi, Akihisa! Muttsulini and Hideyoshi seem to be coming back already!"

"Ya! Now's not the time to fight with Yuuji."

For some reason, I got engrossed in my fight with Yuuji. Let me see, Hideyoshi and Muttsulini are— WAH! WHY ARE THEY ONLY 20M AWAY!

"Yuuji! We'll lose if this keeps up!"

"How can we allow them to do what they want! I'll stop Muttsulini! Akihisa, stop Hideyoshi!"

"Got it! Let's have a ceasefire for now!"

Yuuji and I jump into Muttsulini and Hideyoshi's lanes respectively. Since it ended up like this, even if I have to use despicable moves, I have to stop you from reaching the end point!

I frantically swim towards the halfway mark, and I see Hideyoshi swimming back at me. No matter what, I have to stop you here!

"Wha, what going on, Akihisa? Your lane should be the other one, right?"

"No way, Hideyoshi! I won't let you get past me here!"

My limbs tangle up Hideyoshi, who intends to swim past me. Uu! It's not easy to hold down someone in the water...

"Akihisa, let go of me!"

Hideyoshi continue to struggle as he moves forward. Damn it, I can't hold him up for long!

"DON'T YOU DARE GET AAWWWAAAAYYYYY!!!!"

Even so, I continue to hold onto Hideyoshi. No matter what, if there's any part that I can grab—

—loosen!

Suddenly, the thing I'm grabbing onto loses all resistance.

"...What's going on?"

I stood up straight in the water and confirm the thing that's left in my hand. What's this? This looks like something really important.

"Ah, Akihisa-kun! What are you doing!?"

"Eh?"

"That thing! That thing in your hand!"

Himeji-san turns pale as she points at my hand.

This is, this—

"Ahhahahm this looks somewhat similar to Hideyoshi's swimwear."

"Humm? Why do I feel that it's chilly in front of my chest..."

Seemingly realizing that something's wrong, Hideyoshi stood up from the water.

Seeing Hideyoshi like this, I seem to realize something fatal. That's strange, I seem to have seen a large piece of naked back? Did I—JUST PULL DOWN HIDEYOSHI'S VEST?

"...Even if I die, I have no regrets!"

On the other lane, I seem to hear Muttsulini mutter this.

A while later, the water's dyed red.

"Eh? Is this Hideyoshi's swimsuit? Soo, soo, soo, sooorryy! I swear to god that I never saw anything!"

"Hold on a minute, Akihisa! I'm a guy! Why are you panicking?"

"Woah! Muttsulini! Are you alright!? This amount of blood loss isn't good!"

"...It doesn't matter, this is my one hope..."

"Aahhh!! Muttsulini isn't doing well now! His nosebleed is ever violent now!"

"Ki, Kinoshita! Cover your chest first! Tsuchiya's blood won't stop flowing!"

"Uuu, I don't want! I'm a guy! Why must I cover my chest!"

"Kinoshita-kun! Now's not the time to be so stubborn! Tsuchiya-kun will really die if this keeps up!"

"...Aiko, can you call an ambulance?"

"Okay~ class F people are really interesting."

"Baka onii-chan and company are always so happy. Hazuki's really envious!"

"Onee-sama, I love you..."

In the end, though Muttsulini was on the verge of death, with the emergency help of us and the paramedics, we finally managed to save his life.

☆

It's another Monday morning.

"...Yoshii, Sakamoto. I got something I want to ask you about."

Without even greeting us this moment, Ironman called us out with a blow voice.

"I refuse."

"I have the right to remain silent."

Facing Ironman, both Yuuji and me show a pose of refusal.

On getting this response, Ironman trembles violently.

"...Why—"

Finally managing to say these words, Ironman suddenly inhales deeply.

"—WHY IS IT THAT WHEN I ASKED YOU TO CLEAN THE POOL, THE POOL GOT DYED RED!? SEEMS LIKE YOU WON'T LEARN IF I DON'T GIVE YOU TWO SOME PUNCHES! COME EXPLAIN CLEARLY IN THE COUNSELLING ROOM!"

The loud bellowing voice of Ironman seem to rumble the entire classroom.

"WHAT KIND OF JOKE IS THAT, TO HEAR YOU LECTURE US!? IT'S THANKS TO US BEING AROUND THAT NOBODY DIED. I EVEN WANTED TO ASK YOU FOR SOME CREDIT!"

"THAT'S RIGHT, THE SITUATION THEN WAS REALLY DISASTROUS!"

"SHUT UP! I DON'T UNDERSTAND A SINGLE BIT OF YOUR JAPANESE! IT'S BETTER TO SETTLE THIS WITH FISTS!"

"DAMN IT, THIS TEACHER! AKIHISA, RUN!"

"GOT IT!"

"THIS WON'T BE SETTLED BY WRITING A REFLECTION OR CLEANING THE POOL, YOU TWO!"

After a moment of resistance, it's all futile. In the end, Yuuji and I got caught.

While we're being beaten up, we roughly explain the event over again. Ironman sighs reluctantly—

"...It seems like Kinoshita can't bathe together with everyone else the next time when we have our training camp. Got to let him have his own personal bathroom..."

Ironman muttered.

HIDEYOSHI KINOSHITA

TETSUJIN: Allow me to answer every student's problems.

3rd year, student T-mura Y-saku's problems.

Tekken-sensei, please listen to my troubles.

Actually, I have someone I like. This person looks really cute, and is really popular, but K-shita H-yoshi-san's gender seems to be designated as a guy.

If so, have I become a homosexual?

Sensei, please tell me what to do.

Tekken-sensei's suggestion.

Sorry, but you just gave me a shocking question, and I don't really know what to say. Truthfully, I'm starting to wonder whether I should have this special bulletin at all. Since you like that person, there should be a twin sister as well. If you're only attracted by his appearance, why don't you confess to his sister? If you're not attracted by his appearance but his personality--you have to calm down and think through it carefully. Though there's a certain group of students who believe in the rumor that 'he's of the 3rd gender 'Hideyoshi', so there's nothing to do with homosexuality', but sensei hopes that you don't get fooled by these rumors. Sensei really wishes for you to have a healthy school life.

2nd year, student K-bo T-mitsu's problems,

Recently, no matter whether I'm awake or sleeping, my mind seems to be thinking of a certain person's figure. As long as I can see him—Y-shii A-hisa-san's smile, I really feel happy.

When I see him sad, I will feel sad as well. But the person's of the same gender...

Are my feelings towards him love?

Tekken-sensei's suggestion.

Did you mind get severely affected recently or something? Even if you don't have any memory of hitting your head, sensei will still recommend that you go for a medical check-up. It's never too late to talk about what homosexuality problems.

2nd year, student S-mizu M-haru's problems.

Ever since I was a 1st year, I had an onee-sama that I truly loved. However, my onee-sama got tricked by a guy recently.

Please tell me what should I do to eliminate that guy?

Tekken-sensei's suggestion.

DON'T YOU GUYS HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER THAN HOMOSEXUALITY ISSUES!!!???

Me and Part-time Work and a Dangerous Weekend

僕とバイトと危険な週末

"Hello, who are you looking for?"

"Ah! Finally got through! That's great~"

"That voice—is it Akihisa? You actually know how to use the international line, what's wrong?"

"YOU DARE TO ASK ME!? WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING, MUM!? I CHECKED SO MANY TIMES ALREADY, WHY DOES MY CARD HAVE ONLY 39 YEN!? DID YOU FORGET TO TOP UP MY FUNDS!?"

"How rude. How can I forget that? As for the money, I safely—"

"So you sent it?"

"—kept it in my wallet."

"YOU ACTUALLY DARE TO TAKE YOU SON'S FUNDS? DAMN IT, I'M GOING TO COMPLAIN TO DAD!"

"Relax, a part of that money went to dad."

"IS DAD AN ACCOMPLICE!? GUZZLING DOWN MY SOURCE OF LIFE, YOU'RE THE WORST COUPLE EVER!"

"...Sorry, actually, dad only got 20% of it."

"AND IT'S COMPLETELY UNEQUAL! DAD'S REALLY PITIFUL HERE!!"

"Your dad didn't even know anything at all and thought that I got half the money. He was really happy."

"...Dad...why did you marry such a person?"

"Sigh, let's not talk about this first."

"Eh? Ah, oh..."

"Didn't mom tell you before? You have to report your grades to me regularly, but ever since you entered 2nd grade, I haven't heard anything about the grades from you, you know?"

"...Sorry mom, my reception here is bad, can't hear you properly here."

"So what if the reception is bad, my problem here is that my son's so stupid."

"I don't think we're on the same topic."

"And it's so bad it's superhuman."

"I, I'm not that stupid!"

"Oh, really? Then say it. How's your grades now?"

"..."

"Hurry up. Once you answer it, I'll consider if I should give the money to you."

"Erm...well, I used to think that mum looks so youthful and pretty, but mom's real charm isn't just in the appearance, but also in the heart. She not only has all the positives as a lady, her movements and decision making won't lose to a man. As your son, I often bragged about this." .

"Enough nonsense. I won't let you give me an excuse, so answer me in English. 'How are your grades in school'?"

"Ah..."

"Ah? 'a thousand'? 'a little bad'? 'about average score'?"

"I'm, sorry..."

--DUUU...

"EHH? WHAT'S WITH THIS RESPONSE? THAT'S TOO COLD ALREADY! DAMN IT! IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL KEEP CALLING YOU LIKE A CRAZED PERVERT! DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE RESILIENCE OF THIS SON!"

☆

"...So after hearing the irritating buzzing that's like those insect repellents, she just added your number to her phone's black list so that it'd refuse to connect your call?"

"Un. Don't you find her really too much? That person is definitely not my mother."

"Well, it's been tough on you..."

During lunch, I grumbled about the conversation I had with my mom to Yuuji. It's unexpected for him to have such a reaction.

"Wh, what's wrong with you, Yuuji? It's disgusting to hear you pity me."

"Nothing much, just that I understand how it's like to have suffered under a mother..."

Yuuji looks up and gazes outside the window, looking like there's something on his mind, and there's actually an expression that's doesn't match that hard and rough expression of his.

"So, what are you going to do, Akihisa?"

The beauty who's holding a packet drink — Hideyoshi - asked me. Seeing him drink the soy milk, I really want to smile. The TV adverts are telling us that soy milk is beneficial to beauty, and this drink really suits Hideyoshi.

"Uu~ hm...really, I'm bothered as well. Seems like my mum hardened her heart. I couldn't call her, and even if I want to fly overseas to find her, it's too far overseas..."

And besides, I really don't know where they are anyway. All I know is that they're running a partnership enterprise somewhere overseas...

"...Seems like you can only earn it yourself."

My classmate Tsuchiya Kouta, nicknamed Muttsulini is reading a magazine as

he said this. The reason why he has such a nickname is because he is a super silent pervert—and even the silent part is missing recently. Now he's just a blatant pervert.

"Ya, seems like I should find a job."

If possible, I hope that I can get my pay daily and immediately start work. I don't suppose that high school students can earn their pay on a daily basis, do they?

"Working? Now that you mention it, the cafe in front of the station is hiring people."

Yuuji places his hand below his chin.

"The cafe in front of the station?"

"Seems like it's called 'La Pedis', right? I don't know what language that is in."

"Hei~ so that place is hiring people?"

That place sells really nice food, and they're really cheap. It's a place that many students from Fumitzuki Gakuen often patronize. There was once when I went there with Minami (while my arm was twisted).

"I remember that it's just relief work for this Saturday. The shift is from 11:00 to 20:00, and the salary is around 8,800 yen. It seems like they welcome any inexperienced people as well."

"Only 1 day, and they invite newcomers as well? That's great to me—but there's a catch, right?"

Normally, a cafe won't hire people who's studying in the short-term, and it's even weirder for them to invite inexperienced people as well. There must be something.

"This hiring method may be a bit different, but I feel that there's no need to be so surprised. Most likely, the staff members just left the shop, so he had to hire people like this?"

This reason is possible. Since they are also willing to accept inexperienced

people, the owner must be really desperate already, right?

"...Besides, Akihisa doesn't have the luxury of being picky about this."

"Uu...you're right about that..."

Like what Muttsulini said, right now, I don't have the capacity to talk about this. This is a matter of life and death, seems like I really have to fight for that part-time job.

"So, Akihisa's going as well?"

"Eh? 'Akihisa's going as well', does this mean that you're going too Yuuji?"

"I'm thinking that way. Actually, I wanted to go there to try it out."

I see, no wonder he understood about those things.

"What is it? Does Yuuji want to buy something? Why don't you say it to us?"

"Well, it's actually nothing...I just want to add locks to my room, the best and sturdiest kind."

Amongst us youths, from time to time everyone will think of installing locks in our own rooms--but there's probably not many who'd do it for the same reason Yuuji does.

"Oh yeah, how many people do they want?"

If we have to compete against each other in the interview, I may have to poison Yuuji first. I wonder if I still have some of Himeji-san's biscuits...

"I remember it's about 3-4. The place is rather big, so they really need a lot of people."

Now that Yuuji said this, I remember what I saw in the shop. The outside's already like a family restaurant, and there's a lot of variety on the menu. Including the staff in the kitchen, it is possible to have another 3 or 4 people.

"About 4 people, huh? How about Hideyoshi and Muttsulini join us?"

"That can do...maybe I can practice my acting. It's good to have experience."

"...I can get enough money to buy a camera."

Both of them don't have any other plans, so they agreed to it easy. Muttsulini will show his skills in the kitchen, and as for Hideyoshi, there's no real need to talk about it.

"Since we decided, let's go for the interview after class today. It'll be over if we can't get others."

"You're right. Let's do it."

"Got it."

"...(Nods head)"

Because of that, the 4 of us went to the cafe, and after taking the interview there, we got accepted.

☆

"Ahh...you people really came...sorry to bother you for today..."

"O, okay, please take care of us."

On Saturday, the coffee shop owner drags his body that looks extremely frail as he invites the 4 of us in, who arrived an hour early.

(Oi, is this shop owner really going to make it?)

(Um...to me, if such a thing happens again, this brother here will likely jump into the sea below Mount Fuji. He looks really weak.)

Hideyoshi's thoughts hit the mark. If such a person is to appear at a train station platform, I'll tell the conductor to watch him and prevent him from jumping onto

the tracks.

(I heard a rumor...that this shop owner's wife and daughter left him.)

Yuuji muttered.

Maybe this shop owner couldn't take the sudden stress of losing his wife and daughter? Thinking about it, it's rather likely that he would hire one-day-workers. Anyway, we just need to help out before his wife and daughter comes back.

(That's strange. I remember that there were a few girls working here the last time...)

(I don't know what happened to them as well. Most likely there's something to their resignation that we don't know of.)

So they resigned? Seems like they didn't want to get involved with the shop owner's business.

"Well, here are your uniforms...tell me if the sizes don't match..."

The shop owner places the folded uniforms in front of us.

""""My size doesn't match at all.""""

The moment we received the uniforms, Yuuji, Muttsulini and me said this in perfect unison.

"My gender doesn't match."

On a side note, that's Hideyoshi voicing his displeasure over being given a female uniform.

"Eh? That's strange...I definitely measured it before..."

The shop owner tilts his head, but no matter how I see it, the sizes don't match.

"Erm, my uniform may be a bit too small, but Yuuji and Muttsulini—no, Sakamoto and Tsuchiya's sizes definitely don't match."

Did the shop owner give the uniforms to the wrong people? If it's not, his eyes must be really bad then.

"Is it...but to me, Sakamoto-san is S, Yoshii-san is M, and Tsuchiya-san is ERO —no, L..."[5]

This shopkeeper can't be underestimated at all!

"...I have no interest in ERO."

""WHA!!""

On hearing what's definitely the biggest lie of the century, Yuuji and I shouted out in shock.

"Muttsulini, no matter what, you can't just lie like that."

"Ya, if you want to lie, make sure it's at least believable."

"...(Shakes head violently)."

That shaking-head pose of his is blatantly a lie. Really, is there a need to make a such huge lie?

"Never mind, forget about that. My size is L, so I can swap with Muttsulini."

Maybe I might seem small when standing next to Yuuji, but I am taller than the average boy. To me, the width of an M-sized uniform may be wide enough, but the length isn't enough.

"...I'll wear M. It's perfect."

I swap uniforms with Muttsulini. Hm, size L does fits me.

"Shopkeeper, I should be wearing XL. Can you help me change to another one?"

Yuuji has no one to exchange uniforms with, so he could only return the uniform.

"I see...you're right...I accidentally mixed up the uniform sizes with my fetishes..."

That's a really casual error there.

"Well, I did say that my gender's wrong..."

Alright, time to change, and let's start working!

☆

The worker's restroom isn't really big, so both Muttsulini and I enter first.

"Sure feels like the school festival."

"...We seem to be fated with cafes."

After putting our personal stuff into the storage cupboard, Muttsulini and I started talking as we change clothes.

This shop uniform has long black pants and a white shirt, with a block tightfitting vest over it. It's a normal waiter uniform. A black apron around the pants, a black bow tie, and we're all good.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

"...Excuse us."

After changing, Muttsulini and I walk out of the restroom in similar uniforms as we call out to the people outside. Yuuji and Hideyoshi seem impressed as they look at our attire.

"Haha, really suits you guys. You guys really have the look."

"The way I see it, both of you look really cool now."

"Re, really?"

"...How embarrassing."

Unlike the school uniform or casual uniform, these are actual cafe uniforms. I already feel bad about dressing up like them, and I'm a lot more embarrassed now that they praised me.

"Then, I'll go in with Yuuji."

"Um, our turn."

After saying out our thoughts, this time, it's Yuuji and Hideyoshi's going in with the uniforms in the hands--eh WAIT A MINUTE!!!

"YUUJI YOU IDIOT! HOW CAN YOU JUST GO IN AND CHANGE CLOTHES WITH HIDEYOSHI LIKE THAT!?"

"...Ten thousand deaths await you!"

I frantically try to force the door open, but they locked themselves inside; the handle couldn't be turned. If this keeps up, Hideyoshi will be in danger!

But Yuuji ignores us who're intending to break the door, not understanding our thoughts as he sighs in the restroom.

"What are you saying. Whether we're changing clothes or something else, we're both guys. How can there be any problem?"

BOTH OF YOU ARE GUYS? ANY PROBLEMS? WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS IDIOT UTTERING!?

"YUUJI!! THAT'S AN ERROR ON THE RECORDS!!"

"Wait, wait a minute, Akihisa! I am someone with a male body!"

Seems like Yuuji hasn't understood what's going on. He actually believed the records blindly!

"Sigh, I know. I'll listen to what you have to say once we're done, so just calm down now."

Yuuji said this with an impatient tone.

NO! It'll be over when they changed! If so--

"Yuuji! If you don't want to change you mind no matter what..."

"So what? Don't break the door now! It'll be bad if we have to pay for the door immediately after coming to work here."

"--I'm going to tell Kirishima-san everything!"

Creak!

"I can change in the corridor, right?"

Good that you understand.

"Okay, let's go find the shop owner."

"...(Nods head)"

After solving this crisis, Muttsulini and I head towards the hall.

"Urm...I can't seem to reach the zip on my back. Sorry Yuuji, but can you--eh? Where did Yuuji go?"

"Sorry Hideyoshi, I treasure my life."

Hearing this conversation behind me, I finally relaxed. Really, Hideyoshi's defenselessness is really troublesome.

"Speaking of which, this is a real cafe; different from the one at school. Sure feels refreshing."

"...Very interesting."

Today's work may be a great experience. Though it's not to the extent that I can stop begging my mother for money, it's not too bad.

"You said that you want to do the work in the kitchen right, Muttsulini?"

"...I did say that in the interview."

"Well, you should be in charge of the kitchen."

Harboring nervous feelings, I head towards the the hall where the shopkeeper's at.

"...(Blank)"

The shopkeeper is just sitting around, his soul oozing out of his mouth.

"Shop, shopkeeper, are you alright?"

"Ah...ahh, I'm alright, I'm alright...as long as I deal with the shop's stuff well, I'm sure those two will come back..."

Seems like the shopkeeper unable to distinguish fantasy from reality. Can he really hang on?

(Muttsulini, this guy isn't doing so well, is he?)

(...That may be dangerous.)

(Teag. Why don't we test it out first?)

(...How?)

(Just talk with him as per normal.)

I let Muttsulini remain here as I walk to the shopkeeper.

Let me see, what should I say to him?

"Well, shopkeeper..."

"...Hm? Ahh, what is it?"

"The weather's nice today."

I didn't know what to say, so I just mentioned that the weather's nice today.

"Ahh...yes...daddy's really irritating..."

Seeing his response, it seems like my idea of talking about the weather just went down the drain.

"Um...let's just hope that there will be a lot of customers today."

Let's change the topic. If it's about the shop, he can't possibly ignore it, right?

"My cutest among cutest daughter...she always said that 'I loved papa' before she was 1 year old..."

"Shopkeeper, that's a memory you made up."

I remember a kid has to be about 2 before the kid starts to talk.

(What now, Muttsulini? I couldn't get through to the shopkeeper at all.)

(...How about we talk about his daughter?)

(I see. Maybe we can get a response out of him.)

The shopkeeper was just muttering about things regarding his daughter. If we talk about his daughter, he should have a response, right?

"Well..."

"Erm...hm?"

"How's your daughter li--"

"I give you 5 seconds to pray to god."

Immediately, a chilly object is placed at my neck.

"Hol, hold on a moment, shopkeeper! Besides, where did you get that knife from!?"

"Ah, ahh, I'm terribly sorry...you're the boy who's working today, right? You're not that guy who wants to take away my cute little angel..."

"Ye, yeah, you're mistaken there."

"Hahaha...sorry there..."

The shopkeeper keeps the knife back into his clutches. Seems like I managed to

protect my carotid pulse.

Now that we said so much, is this shopkeeper really alright?

How's Muttsulini's assessment?

(Muttsulini, how is it? Do you find this shopkeeper 'safe' or 'out'?)

(...Try it again.)

You want a 3rd out? That's an appropriate assessment.

But what should I do now? I need my money if I want to survive, and even if the shopkeeper's like this, I can't just say go and then go away...

Just as I'm worrying about how to work together with the shopkeeper,

"Uu, my uniform's the only one different here..."

"Give it up, Hideyoshi. This is for work."

"...Since this is for the money, I don't really have much to argue about..."

Yuuji and Hideyoshi's voices can be heard from behind.

"Ah, you two, how long do you need to change clothes--"

Turning back to look at their attire, I was completely flabbergasted.

The tall Yuuji is rather suited to be dressed as a waiter, so I'll let that pass, but the problem's the other person.

"Sorry. This uniform is really hard to wear. Took me quite a while to wear it."

Hideyoshi tugs at his dress. Anyone will think that he's a waitress.

Eh, should I say something here...

"Hi, Hideyoshi, that really suits you--"

Just as I was about to praise Hideyoshi about this--

"DEAR MY DAUGHHHHTEEEERRRR--"

On seeing Hideyoshi in the uniform, the shopkeeper suddenly opens his arms wide and leaps towards Hideyoshi like a weird bird.

"WHA, WHAT'S GOING ON?"

"SHOP, SHOPKEEPER? WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!!"

"DEAR MY DAUGHHHHTEEEERRRR--"

No way! We can't get through to him!

"Can't be helped! Yuuji, get ready to fight!"

"Got--no wait! We can't hit him! Why is there such a weird movement!?"

"MUTTSULINI, TASER THE SHOPKEEPER!"

"...Can't lock on to target!"

The shopkeeper's moving like a doppleganger. Even Yuuji and Muttsulini can't stop him! If this keeps up, Hideyoshi will be in danger!

"HIDEYOSHI!!!"

"WHA, WHAT DO I DO???"

"TRY AND STOP HIM! SHOUT SOMETHING 'A TEENAGE GIRL WOULD SAY WHEN HE READS HER SECRET DIARY'!"

"I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT I'LL TRY!!"

After I gave him a scenario, Hideyoshi flipped into an actor on a stage.

"...I HATE DADDY THE MOST!!!"

Such a vicious and spiteful line there. Now that his cute (fake) daughter said this, the shopkeeper should be shocked--

"REALLY...HOW ABOUT YOU BATHE TOGETHER WITH PAPA!!!"

What the heck, no effect at all! Or rather, isn't there something wrong with this conversation!? Either way, there's no 'bath together with papa' option here!?

"If that's the case, we'll let him calm down through violence! Back away, Hideyoshi, take off that uniform! Yuuji, Muttsulini, we're going all out!!"

"""Roger!"""

"DEAR MY DAUGHHHHTEEEERRRR--"

After setting the taser power to the maximum and hitting him hard 4 times, the shopkeeper finally can't get up.

☆

"What should we do now?"

"What else can we do? The shopkeeper already became like this, we can't do anything on our own. Let's just put a 'closed for today' sign here.

The shopkeeper that just went berserk has collapsed onto the floor with white eyes now. Good thing there isn't any damage done to the stop, but the four of us can't possibly open the shop on our own like that.

"I say that we still have a chance of working next time."

In order to prevent the shopkeeper from going berserk again, Hideyoshi took that skirt off and puts on the male waiter uniform again. But this looks really cute. How awkward.

"Can't be helped. Let's find another chance to work."

"...Too bad."

"Eh? Does this mean that the money--"

"Of course we can't get it, we haven't even worked."

"I, I see...you're right..."

Really a pity. Of course I feel bad about not being able to get my pay, but I was really looking forward to serving people professionally. I had no chance to do that during the school festival Really want to try it...the moment the door rings and opens, and then I energetically say 'welcome' to the customers--

--Ding dong

"Welcome!"

Such a greeting may be rather interesting. That's really...strange?

"That's great! The shop's open. We're still worrying about how to spend the time~"

"Yup. This is great."

Treating my practice as a response, the two nee-sans who look like office ladies walk into the shop! Damn it! How can I say 'we're closed for today' now.

(Oi Akihisa! Why did you just greet them?)

(I, I'm sorry! I didn't mean! I just thought of it in my mind and then they just appeared at this moment...)

I just naturally greeted them because the timing was perfect. Coincidence is really scary!

(This is bad. The way I see it, I don't think we can just chase them away like that...)

(...We can only do our best before the shopkeeper wakes up.)

(Uu...I'm sorry.)

Though I don't know how long it'll take for the shopkeeper on the other side to

wake up, right now, the four of us can only only the front. To think that we would actually end up in such a predicament that we can't back out from.

(Sigh, can't be helped...but at least if they makes things that are on the menu. We should be able to make them, so let's give it a go. Akihisa and Hideyoshi will be in charge of serving the customers. Muttsulini, you take the kitchen. As for drinks, I'll be in charge.)

(I got it.)

(...Understood.)

Yuuji walks into the bar counter, and Muttsulini disappears into the kitchen, while Hideyoshi and me are in charge of serving outside, so of course, we have to remain in the hall.

(Akihisa, let me try this first. You'll take the next group.)

(Um, got it.)

After saying that to me, Hideyoshi, dressed in a waiter's uniform, walks towards the customers at the door.)

"Two of you? Please follow me."

Leading the first customers for the day, Hideyoshi brings them to the table near the window. While the customers are sitting down, Hideyoshi uses this time to leave for a while before taking the tray with glasses of ice water to to their table.

"Once you're done deciding on what you want, please kindly notify me."

After bowing courteously to the customers, Hideyoshi turns and heads back. Great, those customers don't seem to have found out anything.

"Yuuji, there's no problem with the drinks right?"

"Hm, I should be able to make the easy ones. Muttsulini will handle the food, so there shouldn't be any problems."

At this moment, I suddenly feel that Yuuji and Muttsulini's talents are so reliable

here. Of course, I'm also envious of them.

Just when these complicated thoughts are in my mind, Hideyoshi also finishes his work of delivering the tea as he returns to me.

"As expected of Hideyoshi. It's foolproof."

"Ya, it's nothing if I treat this as acting. And since there aren't that much audience, I can perform better."

It's true. Hideyoshi's face isn't stiff or awkward. I should learn from him.

"Right, I should do my best!"

"That's the spirit, but don't be too jumpy. If you're too nervous, it may affect your movements, or you may end up biting your tongue."

Anyway, Hideyoshi's telling me not to get nervous and or slip my tongue, right? Since this is what someone with experience said, I should remember that. The most important thing is 'not to fall' and 'don't slip your tongue'.

--Ding dang!

Oh, customers are here. Time for me to me! Watch it, don't 'bite my tongue' and 'don't fall'!

"Welchiam!"

Bit my tongue.

""""..."""

The three nee-sans who just stepped in lower their heads to restrain their laughter. Damn it, I really want to cry and run away.

Bu, but how can I feel dejected after just a minor mistake! Must calm down, don't bite my tongue. I take a deep breath—

"—Welchiam..."

CLANG! (I rush inwards)

"AH! Kiddo, aren't you going to greet us?"

"Don't worry! We're not laughing at you!"

"Try it again? Okay?"

Uu! Why am I so useless!?

"Wh, what is it, Akihisa? Why did it end up like that?"

Seeing me run back like this, Hideyoshi couldn't hide his look of intrigue.

Ahh...I'm really envious that everyone could remain so calm...but how can I run away! Got to face them!

"So, sorry, I was a little confused just now."

I returned back to the customers, bow my head and apologized. The customers giggle as they forgive me of my actions. Good thing they're kind-hearted customers.

"Then, please allow me to lead you to your table."

After recollecting myself, I bring the customers to the cabin table near the window and serve up the menu and ice water. While they start to decide on their orders, I return back to the bar counter.

"Oh, I see that my customers are almost done."

Hideyoshi notices the actions of the first group of customers and then walks over to them.

"Excuse me, but may I know what you have decided on?"

"Please give us an Espresso, a lemonade and two seasoned smoothies."

"Okay, please let me confirm your order. An Espresso, a lemonade and two seasoned smoothies. Please hold on, your order will be served soon."

Hideyoshi takes back the menus that the customers used and returns back to the bar counter.

"An Espresso, a lemonade and two seasoned smoothies."

"Got it."

"...(Nods head)."

After Hideyoshi said finish, Yuuji and Muttsulini immediately got to work. Sure feels good.

"Akihisa, the table over there seems to be done as well."

"Ah, that's true. I'll go take their order."

Like what Hideyoshi said, the customers I led are looking here now. I see, so I just need to ask them 'may I have your order please?'. Okay, I'll do my job well.

Taking a deep breath--

"Dexcuse me..."

Pzzztt!

The customers spit out ice water, causing the shop to have a fresh rainbow arc.

"...Excuse me, may I have your order, please?"

I really, really want to bury myself into a hole.

"The, then, I want a hot cocoa and a cheesecake. Do your best."

"I want an orange juice and scones. Do your best."

"I, I want milk tea and a Montblanc[6]. Do your best."

"O, okay, thank you very much..."

After taking the menus back, I say to Yuuji and Muttsulini,

"Hot cocoa, orange juice, milk tea, cheese cake, scones, Montblanc, one each. And 3 'do your best'."

"...Why are the customers encouraging you?"

"...Did something happen after opening the shop?"

Yuuji and Muttsulini probably won't even understand my feelings since they're not in charge of serving.

I prepare the cups as I wait for the desserts to be ready. After which, I then deliver the food and drinks onto their table. I just served it to them, and yet I got told 'You did brilliantly'. It's really heart-aching...

And thus, time slowly starts to pass--

--DING DONG!

"Welcome, may I know how many of you?"

Hideyoshi says as he greets the customers who enter the shop.

We're not too busy and also not too bored to tears, the customers start to come in one by one...ah, there are customers here as well, and these are the first male customers of the day. Okay, watch me!

"Welcome, may I know how many of you?"

"Oh, there's two of—eh, isn't this Yoshii? What are you doing here?"

The customers who stepped into the shop shouted when they saw me. Speaking of which, where have I met this pair before? Baldy...mohawk head...pair...bra on head...

"Ahh! It's the hentai sempais!"

"WHO IN THIS WORLD WILL CALL SUCH A NAME!?"

"WE'RE TSUNEMURA AND NATSUKAWA! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR MEMORY!?"

That's right, they're the Toko-Natsu duo.

"My apologies, please let me lead you to your seats."

"That's really disrespectful..."

Though they're perverts, they're still customers as well. I still nod my head respectfully and led them to their seats before serving them ice water.

"Once you're done with your selections, please notify me, thank you."

After saying that, I return back to the orders station, and not far away, Hideyoshi, who was serving other customers, is back.

"Oi, you two."

While the customers are still deciding on what to order, I was preparing the towels when Yuuji suddenly called me from behind the counter.

"What is it, Yuuji?"

"It's regarding the drinks. The milk today doesn't seem to be here, and there's none left. If the customers want to order any milk-based beverages, you have to watch out."

Speaking of which, one of the selling points of this shop is the fresh milk they provide. But if that's the case, we have to be careful of the customers ordering milk-based drinks.

"I got it. I'll make sure to be careful about the milk-based drinks."

"Ahh, thanks guys."

After saying that, Yuuji returns to the bar.

"Excuse me~"

The group of customers called. It's Hideyoshi's group.

"Yes, I'll be there."

Hideyoshi takes the order form and prepares to take the orders from the customers.

"May I know what you have decided?"

"Yes, we would like to have an ice coffee and ice milk tea."

"I'm really sorry, but we ran out of milk. We can prepare iced red tea immediately though. May I?"

"Ah, I see~ then I'll have iced red tea then."

"I'm really sorry. Let me confirm your order. One iced coffee and one iced red tea. Please wait, the drinks will be served soon."

After bowing to the customers, Hideyoshi returns to the bar.

I see. So I have to serve them like this. Better remember this.

"Oi, can we order now?"

"Ah, yes, we'll serve you."

Hearing the Toko-Natsu pair call, I immediately grab the menu and head towards them. Got to watch out if they order anything milk-related.

"May I know what do you like to order?"

"Hm, I want ice coffee."

Hm, so mohawk head ordered a cup of coffee. No problems.

"I want milk tea."

Oh, we got a problem. No need to panic, I just need to follow what Hideyoshi did.

"Dear customer, I'm really sorry."

"Hm? What is it?"

"We ran out of milk, so we need to switch the milk into ice. I hope you can understand."

"THAT'S JUST ORDINARY ICE!!!"

"Please hold on, we'll be serving the drinks soon."

"ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME!?"

I bow towards them as I return back to the bar counter and notified Yuuji and the rest what they ordered. As there're only drinks, it was completed immediately.

I put the two drinks on the tray, taking care not to let them spill out.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. This is your iced coffee."

"Oh."

I serve the iced coffee in front of the mohawk-head sempai.

"This is ice."

"I DON'T WANT THAT!"

The baldy-sempai doesn't seem to be satisfied with what he ordered as he is suddenly outraged.

Even so, it's our fault that we ran out of milk, so why don't we give him a special discount—okay!

"Dear customer, please relax. We'll charge you half price for this drink."

"THERE'S NO NEED TO CHARGE MONEY FOR THAT!!"

I already made way, but seems like the baldy-sempai doesn't understand.
Uu~hm, how bothersome...

"If there's no milk, just get me a mix. No need the ice!"

"A mix...is it? I got it."

Now the order has changed. No ice, just a mix.

"Yuuji, I wan—eh, where did he go?"

I couldn't find Yuuji anywhere in the bar counter. Most likely, he went behind to do something. Really, it's not good to keep an emotional customer waiting...can't be helped, I'll have to make the drinks this time.

"But how am I going to make a mix?"

Even if it's me, I know a mix refers to a coffeemix. The problem is what kind of coffee do they want.

Since it's called a mix, it means a mix of several stuff, right—ah, I know.

I pour the coffee that Yuuji prepared into the cup, put the cup onto the tray and serve it to the customer.

"Sorry to make you wait. This is the mix you ordered."

"Oh, we did wait long."

I place the cup in front of baldy-sempai. The sempai immediately straightens his back proudly as he reaches for the cup.

"Oh yeah, what did you mix inside?"

Before the cup reached the lips, baldy-sempai suddenly asked me. Well, that—

"A mix of iced coffee and hot coffee."

"DON'T MIX THESE TWO THINGS TOGETHER! THAT'LL JUST MAKE THE COFFEE WARM!!"

"I can also go by your personal preference and add tabasco and toothpicks if you want."

"WHO WOULD HAVE SUCH A LIKING!?"

The baldy-sempai roared out with a fuming red face.

What should I do now? Such a ruckus will bring discomfort to others. At this moment, should I...oh yeah! I can calm him down by talking about something else!

"Oh yes, dear customer..."

"What? You want to say something?"

The baldy-sempai retorted angrily. In order to make him calm down I show a smile as I try to talk to him.

"Speaking of which, why aren't you wearing the bra on your head today?"

"GET OUT! WE'LL TALK OUTSIDE!!"

The plan failed. My efforts earned the wrath of the baldy-sempai as he takes the cup of coffee. Is he planning to splash it on me?

"HOW CAN I LET YOU DO THAT!?"

Sensing danger, I leap aside. The coffee that missed flies—

"AH!"

—and splashes onto the nearby Hideyoshi.

""Ah...""

Hideyoshi's clothes are dyed with a large stain of coffee.

"So, sorry, I wasn't aiming at you..."

The baldy-sempai bows to Hideyoshi in apology. Even if he's a sempai, what he did was too much.

"No need, please don't mind."

Hideyoshi responds with a gentle acting smile. That, that's definitely a professional level!

(Sorry to get you involved, Hideyoshi.)

(No need to worry, I just need to change clothes.)

(Hearing you say this, you really helped me out here.)

After exchanging a few words, Hideyoshi nods his head at the customer before heading to the restroom. He must be trying to get rid of the dirtied clothes.

—Speaking of which, are there any clothes for him to change into?

☆

--DING DONG!

"Hello, and welcome."

As Hideyoshi went to change clothes, I'm the one in charge of serving the customers this time.

On seeing my face, the customer lets out a bright smile.

"Hello, we're here, Akihisa-kun."

"Eh? Himeji-san?"

Walking into the shop is my classmate Himeji Mizuki-san. As there's no lessons today, her attire is of ordinary plainclothes. Though she's wearing a common shortskirt and T-shirt, her cute looks makes anything she wears look good on her. I really want to take her home.

"Not bad Aki. Heh~This really suits you, you know."

"Eh? Even Minami's here?"

Standing beside Himeji-san is my other classmate named Shimada Minami. She's wearing ordinary jeans and a T-shirt. Of course, this looks rather alluring,

but if I'm to bring her home, I'll (my body and house) will definitely meet a tragic end.

GROWUP!!

"Oi oi oi, Mr Waiter, stop standing around. Can you lead us to our seats?"

Minami snickers at me as she waves her hand.

Ugh! Why do I feel that Minami's S-personality is appearing and disappearing at the same time!?[7]

"Ah, okay, may I know how many of you are there?"

Even if we're friends, a customer's still a customer. I have to serve them well.

"4 of us."

"Eh? 4?"

But there's only Himeji-san and Minami in front of me. Who's the last one?

"One will be here later, as for the other one..."

Minami said as she looks into the shop.

"...Yuuji, hiding something from your wife is the start of having an affair."

"What's going on? I seem to hear Shouko's voice even when she's not supposed to be here! Is this a curse!?"

Class A's rep Kirishima-san is already standing behind Yuuji from who knows when.

"Kirishima-san told us that Akihisa-kun and the rest were working here."

"Ah, I see."

It'll be too rude to say 'but we didn't tell Kirishima-san about this~'. Let's just treat it as if a lovestruck girl's movements can't be underestimated.

"Anyway, please follow me."

""Okay~""

I lead them to a four-seater table and serve up some ice water.

After a while, Kirishima-san's seated as well.

"May I know what you have decided on?"

I ask the three of them who're looking at the menu.

"Hm~ what should I order?"

"Every item here looks good."

Himeji-san and Kirishima-san still seem like they're unable to decide. Both of them don't seem to have entered this shop before.

If I can just recommend them something...ah, that's it.

"Well, the last time I came here, I felt that the crepes were rather delicious."

I don't know if Muttsulini can replicate the taste, but I guess that guy has no problems with it, since there's the recipe for reference.

"...The last time you came here?"

What Himeji-san was interested in wasn't the crepes. I wasn't trying to talk about that...

"Ah, that...who did you go with?"

"Eh? With Minami--GWOH!"

"I, idiot! Mizuki! That...don't be mistaken, it's not like that! We didn't come alone here!"

Minami suddenly stuffed my mouth.

(Aki! stop spouting nonsense! Anyway, just follow what I say!)

Minami softly said that to me, and I can only nod my head. I don't know what's going on, but I better follow what she says.

"Eh? Not just the two of you? I, I see. If that's so..."

"Is, isn't this nonsense, right, Aki~"

"Uu, yeah. It wasn't just two people. There were four, including Yuuji!"

CRACK!!!

My right wrist got dislocated.

(Why are you saying things that're obviously lies! Sakamoto's here, can't they just ask him?)

"...Yoshii, who's the last one?"

Kirishima-san expression reaches her hand out for my left hand. If my answer can't satisfy her, this life can't possibly remain for long.

"The, the last one...is that person! Right Aki?"

"Ye, yeah! It's that person, that--"

If I'm to talk about someone who's here, the lie will definitely be seen through. If so, even if I can talk about someone who's unrelated to us, it won't feel realistic, so that won't do. And since we were in this kind of shop, a girl's name will seem more natural than a guy's...

"That---we came with Takahashi-sensei!"

CRRAAACCCKKK!!!

"WAAHHH!! MY WRIST JOINT WAS JUST REATTACHED AND IS NOW ABOUT TO BE DISLOCATED AGAIN!"

"SO I SAY, WHY ARE YOU SO STUPID TO MAKE SUCH A STUPID LIE! HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY BE HERE WITH TAKAHASHI-SENSEI!?"

"Eh? What? It was a lie? So Akihisa-kun did come here with Minami?"

"...'A hellish gate has opened. Compensate the crime with your death. Are you ready, Yuuji?'"

"What, what happened!? Why is Shouko showing a battle stance!?"

Yuuji's within range of Kirishima-san's attack, and I'm currently under violence from Minami. In such a situation, what can I do...

--DING DONG!

"Sorry I'm late—eh, what's everyone doing?"

The one who broke this deadlock situation is everyone's idol Kinoshita Hideyoshi—as if, that person is...

"...Yuuko."

That's right, it's Hideyoshi's twin sister Kinoshita Yuuko-san. So the last one who will be here later was Kinoshita-san. It's really rare for the four of them to move together.

"Incho, Shimada-san, calm down. It's not good to stir up violence in somebody else's shop!"

Kinoshita-san stares at Kirishima-san and Minami, who were preparing to attack us. Seems like I haven't heard of such a logical statement after a long time.

"...But Yuuji, he—"

"Idiotic Aki actually—"

"Stop giving me excuses. If you do that, wouldn't the other customers be bothered?"

"...Got it."

"You're right..."

Being scolded by Kinoshita-san, both of them immediately stopped their acts of

murder. Are we saved?

"Oh ho, my sister really can talk."

"Ya, Hideyoshi! Good thing your sister helped us out—WAH, WHAT'S WITH THAT GETUP!?"

Hideyoshi, who ended up beside us since who knows when, is now in that gentle waitress uniform.

"Ohh, that's because I couldn't find any waiter uniform that suits me, so I could only wear this."

Hideyoshi said this as he lifts the shortskirt slightly. Is that so? So there aren't any more uniforms to choose from.

"Sigh, so what? Once the customers see you as a waitress, they should be rather happy."

With such a cute face, and such a defenseless action, any guy will be staring at Hideyoshi's legs.

"Like this?"

"Sort of."

Okay okay, good thing there's nothing that'll create such a huge commotion. We should continue work—

"Hideyoshi, can---------`` you please wait?"

—Or so we wanted to, but Kinoshita Yuuko-san is standing in front of us.

"Uuoh? Ane-san, anything's the problem?"

Hideyoshi got his hand held firmly by his sister, but he just tilts his head, not understanding why as he asks.

"Don't worry too much. Yoshii-san, where's the washroom?"

"Eh? Over there."

"Really? Thanks."

After I pointed at the washroom, Kinoshita-san grabbed Hideyoshi's wrist as she carries a smile, heading to the washroom.

"Ah, yea, Incho and Shimada-san..."

The moment she was about to disappear, Kinoshita-san suddenly left these words.

"I take back what I said just now. Forget about disturbing others, those things you don't like, you can just deal with them however you want♪"

'BAAM' After that, the sound of the washroom door being slammed can be heard.

"Ane-san, what's going on? Why are you grabbing onto my wrist?"

"I'm about to ask you why are you wearing such a short skirt and moving around? I did say it before, right? Because you're so reckless, I ended up having everyone staring at me so weirdly, so I warned you not to do that already, right?"

"Ahahaha, what are you saying. Isn't ane-san always walking around in her underwear at home? Right now, you don't really have to hide it—AH, ANE-SAN! NOOO! MY JOINTS CAN'T GO INTO THAT DIRECTION!!!"

"...Yuuji, I already got permission. Tell me everything about your date with Takahashi-sensei."

"What are you saying? And even though you asked me to spill the beans, it doesn't seem like you have any interest in listening! Am I thinking too much!?"

"Th, that, Akihisa-kun! As for what we talked about just now, so you and Minami really..."

"It, it, it, it, it's not like that, Mizuki! Aki's an idiot, so his memory is a little chaotic!"

"GYAH! MINAMI, CALM DOWN, LET GO OF MY HAND! IF THIS KEEPS

UP, I'LL HAVE ANOTHER WRIST JOINT!!!"

Just as this hellish depiction is raised all over the shop—

"WHA, WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE DOING INSIDE THE SHOP!!!"

The shop roar echoes throughout the shop.

"Shop, shopkeeper?"

"Really, what are you doing when other people are unconscious? Forget about opening the shop, to actually do such things in front of the customers, what in the world are you people thinking!!!"

The forceful shout sounded really spine-chilling.

No matter how weak he is, he's still a shopkeeper. He can actually stop the angry Minami, Kirishima-san and Kinoshita-san. If that's the case, me, Yuuji and Hideyoshi won't be killed, right? Great, this is great...

"Dear customers, I'm really sorry. Please don't mind these brats and continue to enjoy your teatime and resttime here."

The shopkeeper bows to the customers one by one. Now the shop should be back to normal, right? Just as I put my hand on my chest, thinking that everything's over—

—DING DONG!

The doorbell at the entrance lets out a sharp sound. Looking there, what seems like a mother and daughter combination walks into the shop.

"So how is it, 'papa'? Have you reflected properly?"

The one who said this to the shopkeeper was a girl with two spiral like curls. I seemed to have met her before.

"Mi, Miharu? DEAR MY ANGEL!!"

The shopkeeper immediately froze and reveals a teary look.

"That's great, shopkeeper, at least your daughter and wife are back."

"Yoshii-san...thank you..."

That's good, that's good, now at least there's a happy ending. Since I don't have to be executed and can also get my salary, and the shopkeeper got his wife and daughter back, everything's okay.

"Miharu...will never, ever leave papa again..."

The shopkeeper tearily stumbles towards his daughter, and the daughter slowly walks to the shopkeeper.

"Ah! Is that, Minami onee-sama? Are you here to look for Miharu? Aiya, if you had said so earlier, Miharu would have set the entire shop up and waited for you."

"Mi, Miharu! Is this your house!?"

But walking halfway, the daughter suddenly turns and widens her arms to try and hug Minami forcefully.

"...Mi...haru?"

"Sho, shopkeeper?"

Seeing the scene in front of him, the shopkeeper froze. Why do I see a large black terrifying aura behind him?

"...So it was you..."

As if he just returned from the depths of hell, the shopkeeper lets out a low bellow.

"So it was you? You damned woman who tricked MY DAUGHTTTAAAA!!!"

Suddenly, the shopkeeper shockingly increased his speed. This movement may

be able to match Muttsulini's summoned beast in speed!

"Shop, shopkeeper! If you're going to lose your cool here, everyone's going to go crazy! And besides, isn't the saying 'you damned woman who tricked my daughter' too strange? Haven't you realized it?"

"DEAR MY DAUGHHHHHTTTEEEEERRRRR!!!!"

I can't stop him at all!

"...Yuuji, get ready to be punished."

"So I say, what are you talking about!? Why must I be punished by you—GYYAAAHHHHOOOOOOHHH!!!"

"Hideyoshi, you haven't fainted yet? The main course's starting now."

"Ah, ane-san! NO! MY JOINT CAN'T GO THERE...UU!!"

"Akihisa-kun! You haven't answered my question! So you and Minami went on a date!?"

"A date with onee-sama!? THIS ROTTEN PIG! I'M GOING TO DICE YOU UP!!"

"DEAR MY DAUGHHHHHTTTEEEEERRRRR!!!!"

"You, you're mistaken, uncle! I'm not with Miharu, but with Aki!"

"MI, MINAMI! DON'T GET ME INVOLVED! EH? WHY IS THE SHOPKEEPER COMING RIGHT AT ME! SOMEONE, SOMEONE PLEASE SAVE ME!!!!"

☆

"...And then?"

"Urm, anyway—I just hope that mother-sama can graciously send me my pocket money. Please..."

"Really, you..."

"I, I tried my best, but my luck was bad, and with a lot of things that happened, there was a lot of disasters."

"Sigh, can't be helped. I'll just help you out this time."

"Really? Mother-sama, thank you very much!"

"But if you're not going to live your life properly—"

"If I don't live my life properly?"

"I'll send Akira over and make her watch every single move you make!"

"...Who's that? I don't seem to know her."

"Are you so stupid that you forgot your own family member's name?"

"MOM! PLEASE SHOW MERCY! I, I ALWAYS LIKED LIVING ALONE!"

"Shut up! If you want to live alone, you have to live properly!"

"MOM! MOM! PLEASE, JUST LISTEN TO ME!!!"

Du, du, du...

"...It should be alright, right? She just said, if only I live my life

properly...right?"

Author's Notes

I'm really grateful that everyone's holding onto this wacky 'Baka to Tesuto to Syokanju Volume 3.5'. I'm Inoue Kenji, the author in charge of writing this series. The series has finally reached the 4th volume, and if it wasn't for the support of the readers, I would definitely have given up midway through. At this point, I really want to express my thanks that can't merely be expressed through words.

Also, since there's the term 'test' in this series' name, I'll introduce the test question I had during college.

Let's talk about a mini test that a 'practical English' professor gave us.

Professor: "I'm passing the test papers down, please write out the words that I'm going to read."

Having received the papers, I first wrote down my name and student ID down.

Professor: "Then, the first question."

I wrote a (1) on the paper as I prepared to answer the question.

Professor: "Rheumatic heart disease."

Just like that, I decided to leave (1) blank.

Speaking of which, is this really practical English? Is this really practical as compared to haggling terms or greetings? The United Kingdom is really terrifying.

Professor: "The second question."

"I wrote a (2) on the paper.

Professor: "James Thomas."

This is a specialized name. My definition of an 'English test' is wavering.

Maybe this is really practical, but even if that person is called Jackson or Smith, so what? Is this kind of English common? I start to feel unsettled.

Anyway, I just followed what the professor said and wrote the answer, but as for whether it was correct, I didn't have any confidence at all, because I never learned practiced writing a person's name anyway.

The professor seemed to noticed my emotions, and gives me a few comforting words.

Professor: "I'll give you people a hint."

That really helps me out.

Professor: "This is the name of a horse."

THAT WILL ONLY MAKE ME EVEN CONFUSED!!!

random stuff and hand in my answer. On a side note, the professor gave a total of 3 questions, and the last question was 'anything that you can write'. How are you going to grade that? Until now, it's still a mystery to me. English is really hard.

Okay, enough of that. Next, let's listen to my explanation of each short story. The following may reveal the contents of the story, so to the readers who haven't read yet, I apologize.

Baka to Tesuto to Syokanju ~Preparation Chapter~

This work was written earlier than my first volume, so it should be considered my first work. As it was released on a website called FB online[8], I suppose not a lot of people know about it, right? The website will have updates every Friday, so readers, if you're interested, you may check it out. There are also many works that aren't released, and they may be removed without you knowing. There's also a lot of Famitsu Bunko upstarts works and other information about new books. If you have the chance, please visit the site. The readers-online zone also allows readers to ask questions about the works. This is just a little promotion.

Oh yeah, Hazuki who appeared in the 2nd volume appears in this volume. It seemed like a lot of people were confused after reading that volume, so I'm really sorry about it.

Me and Thugs and a Love Letter

This was a short story that was on a FBSP booklet. As for when the story occurred, it's about between the 1st and 2nd volume. The love letter in the beginning is part of the content of a love letter that I don't want people who know me to know of, but please relax, I edited it before. The original letter was really from a real female! no, no, it's not my mom who wrote it. Anyway, the people around me (even my immediate relatives) don't even know that I'm a writer. This love letter was based on a love letter I got in the past--AIYO, I TOLD YOU IT'S NOT! AND IT'S NOT MY GRANNY WHO WROTE IT!!

Me and Shouko and Kisaragi Highlands

The protagonist this time is Yuuji, and the story occurred between the 2nd and 3rd volume. I tried to change my usual sctick as I wrote this story. Though it's a love comedy, I was somewhat sensing that it was only a comedy...anyway, doesn't matter. As Hideyoshi's phone was damaged in this story, he had no handphone to use in the 3rd volume. It was really not an elaborate explanation, so i'm really sorry.

Me and the Pool and the Swimsuit Wonderland

Everyone seemed to have imagined Hideyoshi in a swimsuit, and this time, I finally managed to write it out. How is it? Did it meet your expectations? For some reason, a lot of people seem to feel that Hideyoshi should be wearing a school swimsuit, and the next most popular idea was a fundoshi[9]. Unbelievably, Hideyoshi's a guy, yet it's really hard to draw him without him wearing a top. Isn't that inexplicable? On a side note, everyone should have expected Minami to wear a competitive swimsuit, but I'm really sorry. This story happened between volumes 2 and 3, so Minami doesn't even know of such things.

Me and Part-time Work and a Dangerous Weekend

This is also between volumes 2 and 3. Akihisa's mother finally appears for the first time! As I was told by my colleague that 'The mothers that Inoue-bro writes about seem somewhat weird', so I always couldn't think of what to write. As for why is it, that's because I don't even know what a normal mother is like!! On an unrelated note, a few days ago, my mother encouraged me on a phone: "Since you're an ugly person, you have to find someone who's willing to marry you!". WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU SPOUTING, YOU DAMNED OLD GRANNY! WE'LL WAIT AND SEE!

--Sorry, I got a bit carried away. My relationship with my mother's still very good.

Okay okay, now for the usual thanks.

To Haga Yui-san, who's in charge of the illustrations, the moment I saw the cover of this volume, my eyes widened. Right now, my PC desktop background should have a change now. You're a terrifying person! N-sama, who's in charge of editoring, your abandoning of your family to focus on work is so cool. I'm really sorry for not being able to let you rest. Kagaya-sama, who's in charge of designing, I'm really sorry that the sudden inclusion of this volume caused your workload to increase. However, I still believe fully in your ability! So please don't abandon me! To all my sempais, whether it's in a banquet or a message or a handphone, I really bothered you people a lot. Because of everyone's suggestions, I am finally able to embrace the 1 year anniversary of starting out, and I really like to thank everybody.

Finally, of course, I have to thank the readers! I'm really, really grateful for everyone's affections. For you bought this book, I can finally continue to write this story. I don't think I can say enough as to how much I'm really grateful for this. Some readers even sent me their handmade book covers, which allows me to gain momentum in my work. Please allow me to earnestly thank everyone

again.

Then, let's meet in the 4th volume where Minami's all-out assault continues! I will try my best not to make everyone wait for too long.

Notes

1. ↑ A Chonmage (,) is a traditional Japanese haircut, popular in the Edo period. Right now, there's a variant of this done on sumo wrestlers.
2. ↑ The Tsurezuregusa (, Essays in Idleness) was an essay written during the Kamakura period (AD 1185-1333). Written by Yoshida Kenko, it has two volumes, 243 chapters.
3. ↑ According to some of the German consultants on this wiki, this is one mangled up German sentence. Darklor suggested that the sentence should be: 'Auf welcher Grundlage unterscheidet Gott zwischen jenen, die haben, und jenen, die nichts haben!? Das reichte mir nicht!' and it should mean: 'On which basis did God differentiate between those which have everything and those which have nothing!? This wasnt enough for me!' EusthEnoptEron and Kadi suggested "Auf welcher Grundlage hat Gott geteilt zwischen denen, die haben, und denen, die nicht haben?! Woran mangelte es mir?!" and "On what basis did god divide between those who have and those who do not?! What did I lack?!". Basically, this is what happens when the author use a machine translator.
4. ↑ A 12-6 curveball should be pretty well known by baseball fans. Basically, the ball sinks (or breaks/ dives) downwards when it's thrown forward in a straight line. This is done by applying topspin onto the ball to make it 'drop'. The reason why this is called a 12-6 is because the motion resembles dropping from the 12 o'clock position to the 6 o' clock position.
5. ↑ ERO and L sound similar in Japan, as for the first two sizes, I don't really understand that. (I'm dead serious when I say that). ERO is a derivation of Erotic. S : Sadist, M : Masochist (Well, according to some fans, thanks for the info, or to myself, maybe not)
6. ↑ A Mont Blanc (or Mont-Blanc aux marrons) is a French dessert of puréed, sweetened chestnuts topped with whipped cream. The name comes from Mont Blanc, as it resembles a snow-capped mountain. (Courtesy of wikipedia)
7. ↑ Again, the S comes out here. Akihisa's saying that Minami's a sadist. Oh

Akihisa...

8. ↑ FB Online: http://www.enterbrain.co.jp/fb/pc/01menu/01menu.html
9. ↑ A fundoshi is the traditional Japanese undergarment for adult males, made from a length of cotton.